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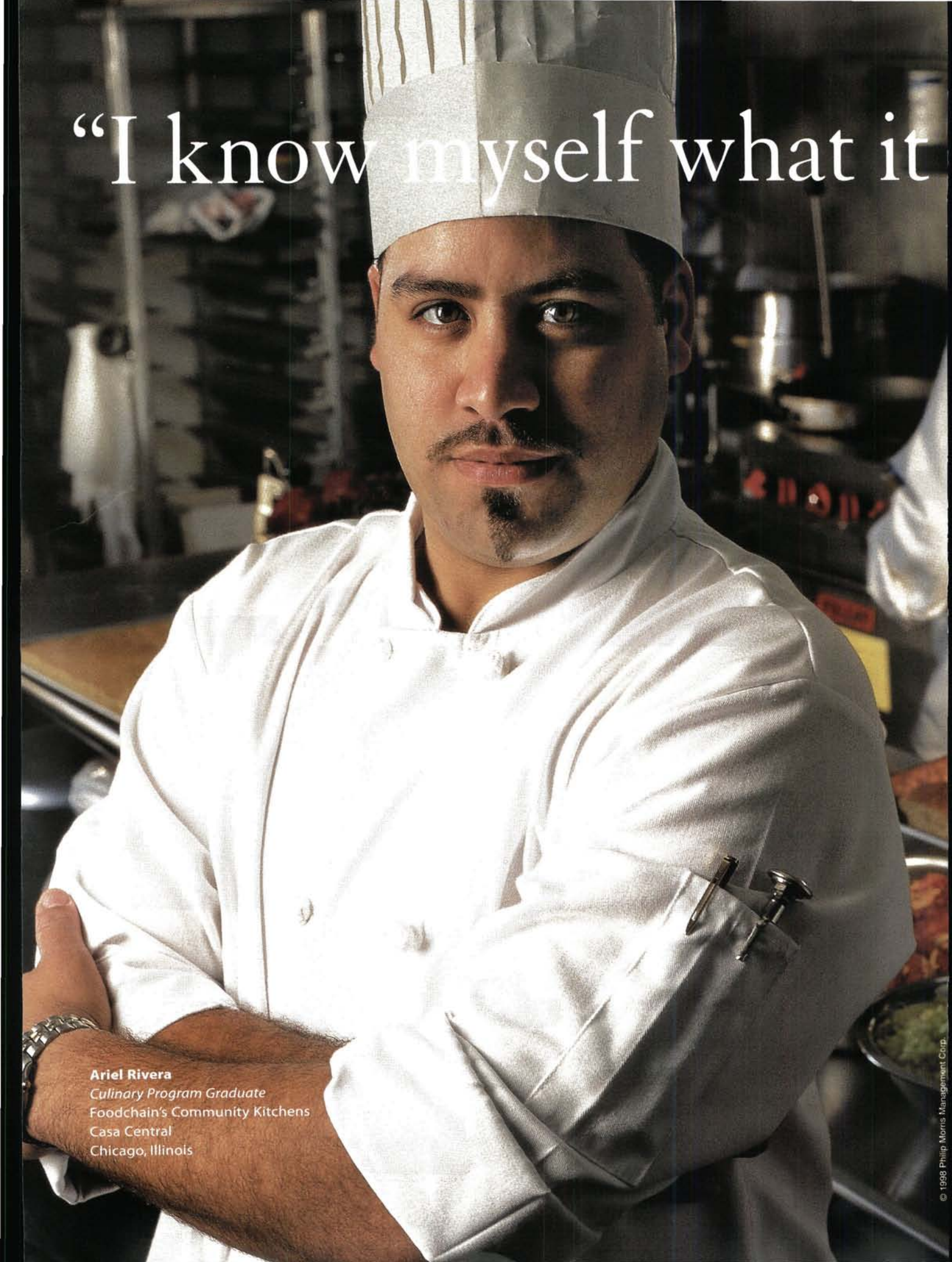

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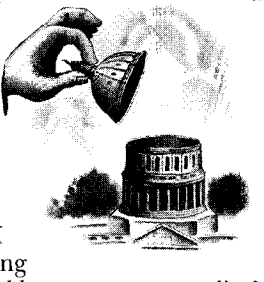
FROM WASHINGTON

The turnout trap

Of all the congressional Republicans, none has articulated a more statesmanlike view of the Starr report than House Speaker Newt Gingrich. The day after the document was sent to the House, Gingrich urged calm and procedural fairness. "Slow down; take a deep breath," he recommended. Once the report hit the Internet, Gingrich once again urged Americans to reserve judgment "until you have given the president a chance to respond and given the Judiciary Committee a chance to do its job."

I'd like to think that this admirable advice reflects a newfound sobriety on the part of the usually bombastic speaker. Or perhaps some hard-won humility. After all, this was a man who endured his own ethics ordeal for signing a letter to Congress that falsely described the role a political action committee played in funding his college course. After a prolonged period of denial and weasel words, Gingrich admitted ethical misconduct and accepted a formal reprimand and a $300,000 fine. Gingrich has also had to face his share of unwanted disclosure about his personal life. A 1995 *Vanity Fair* article by Gail Sheehy quoted a former Gingrich campaign volunteer, Anne Manning, who said she had sex with Gingrich in 1977, when the future speaker was still married to his first wife. Manning told Sheehy that "we had oral sex. He prefers that modus operandi because then he can say, 'I never slept with her.'" Manning claimed that Gingrich also told her: "If you ever tell anybody about this, I'll say you're lying." Sound familiar?



I'd like to believe in Gingrich's sincerity, but I can't quite, because it's also true that Gingrich's judge-not-lest-ye-be-judged posture dovetails perfectly with the Republicans' political strategy for dealing with Bimbroglio. "Taking it slow" is a high-minded name for letting the sorry saga drag out inconclusively for as long as possible so as to maximize the political damage to the Democrats, both in the forthcoming 1998 congressional elections and in the 2000 presidential race.

Gingrich himself, ever the futurist, urged the publication of the Starr report on the Internet. He has not lifted a finger to prevent the planned release by the Republicans of President Clinton's grand jury testimony, even though that blithe abrogation of grand jury secrecy would seem to violate a cardinal principle of the judicial system. Isn't that just what the independent counsel was trying to prevent when he agreed to an elaborate encryption system so that the president's closed-circuit testimony couldn't be captured live? If Clinton had known that the video would eventually be released, would he ever have agreed to waive his Fifth Amendment rights and testify in the first place? Ah, Gingrich's Republicans now say, the videotape of the testimony is no longer grand jury material, since Starr has turned it over to Congress—and the public has a right to know. No mention of the fact that the Watergate file turned over to Congress by then-special prosecutor Leon Jaworski still remains under seal in the National Archives so as to protect anyone from being harmed by the publication of unfiltered information.

But wait a minute. If this is the Republican strategy, how can it possibly work in the face of polls that show the public overwhelmingly doesn't want Clinton either to resign or to be impeached? The answer is that the 1998 election will hinge not on the votes of the moderate, ambivalent folks who make up the broad middle of the electorate—and the bulk of the 60-odd percent who are telling pollsters that they approve of the president's job performance.

The operative number is 33 percent, which is a pretty good estimate of how many people will actually vote this November. In such a low-turnout election, the result hinges on how effective each party is in making sure that its most passionate supporters get to the polls. Bimbroglio will energize the Republican base, while demoralizing even hard-core Democrats. (In New York's rollicking three-way Democratic Senate primary on September 15, only 17 percent of Democrats bothered to show up.) Hence the paradox that an issue most of the public manifestly regards as

continued on page 45

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CORRESPONDENCE

HMO reform

To the editors:

Jonathan Cohn's analysis of the current state of our nation's health care system and the recent partisan reformist suggestions ("Cosmetic Surgery," August 17 & 24) was right on the button, especially his emphasis on the "one basic truth about health care: it is an imperfect market." Many contemporary analysts have forgotten that it is irrational if not bizarre to leave the distribution of medical services up to the marketplace. Medical knowledge is inherently esoteric, and it is, therefore, not fully available even to the most knowledgeable consumer. In many cases, due to fear, pain, urgency, or uncertainty, a patient cannot shop around.

JEOFFRY B. GORDON
Via the Internet

To the editors:

Jonathan Cohn writes that "deep down, for-profit insurance companies don't really want to take care of sick people" because that "cost[s] money." By the same token, deep down, for-profit restaurants don't really want to buy food, since that costs money. But, because they are in the business of feeding people, they grudgingly pay their grocery bills. And, as everyone knows, restaurants that exclusively try to maximize their bottom lines either find a niche at the bottom end of the market or go out of business.

Likewise, health insurers may not like paying doctors' bills, but they'll do it to the extent that keeping their customers happy requires it.

THOMAS P. FORD
Via the Internet

Good guns

To the editors:

I couldn't help but notice some irony in the juxtaposition of your editorials "Shields Up" and "Rusty Got His Gun" (August 17 & 24). On the same page, you advocate America arming itself while disarming its citizens. You find dependence on the "rationality of Saddam Hussein and Kim Jong Il" a dubious proposition. Is dependence on the mercy of the predators infesting our cities any less dubious? The causes of crime and violence in America are legion—to our shame—but that complexity does not negate the right of the individual to self-defense.

G.S. MIZE
Atlanta, Georgia

To the editors:

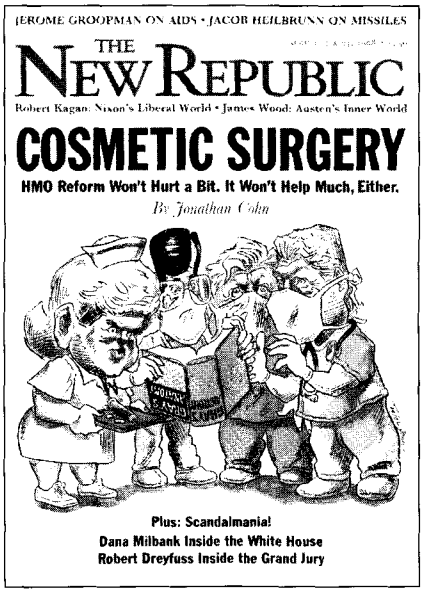
I have a question regarding your editorial "Rusty Got His Gun": Whatever happened to the Second Amendment to the Constitution?

The fact that a minority egregiously abuses a right does not mean that we should abolish that right. While the National Rifle Association and its membership may be foursquare against "gun control," they have just as consistently supported "crime control" against the illegal use of firearms.

NOEL FUNCHESS
Cleveland, Mississippi

To the editors:

Cities that have essentially outlawed gun ownership (Washington, D.C., and New York, for example) continue to have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COSMETIC SURGERY
HMO Reform Won't Hurt a Bit. It Won't Help Much, Either.
By Jonathan Cohn
Plus: Scandalmania!
Dana Milbank Inside the White House
Robert Dreyfuss Inside the Grand Jury

crime rates considerably above what they were before laws were put into place. Where we have seen decreases in the crime rate of such cities, the key factor seems to be government getting tough on criminals rather than on guns.

CHAD NEHRT
Wallingford, Connecticut

Privacy rights

To the editors:

Jeffrey Rosen's argument as to why President Clinton should plead the Fourth Amendment is interesting, and it probably ought to be correct ("Take the Fourth," September 7). However, if that argument is to be adopted, it would be unfair for its first beneficiary to be a president whose administration has done more to undermine privacy than any since Richard Nixon's. From "don't ask, don't tell" to its draconian "antiterrorism" and "crime" bills to its unrelenting efforts to undermine private encryption of data and e-mail, the Clinton administration has shown itself unconcerned with citizens' privacy interests. I say let's return the favor.

GLENN HARLAN REYNOLDS
Knoxville, Tennessee

Seneca Falls

To the editors:

Christine Stansell's "The Road From Seneca Falls" (August 10) is an admirably wide-ranging review, but it does contain one small error early on: Mary Wollstonecraft's daughter Mary (later Mary Shelley) was not born out of wedlock. She was certainly conceived out of wedlock, but, midway through the pregnancy, her mother married the father, the political philosopher William Godwin. When his wife died eight days after giving birth, Godwin not only undertook to raise his daughter (with help from a housekeeper and later from a second wife), he also adopted Mary Wollstonecraft's three-year-old daughter from a previous relationship, who had indeed been born out of wedlock.

ALAN C. ELMS
Davis, California

To the editors:

The books that Christine Stansell reviewed are important, and I was glad to see them receive recognition. But I was concerned by a few inaccuracies in the article. Mary Wollstonecraft's illegitimate daughter was Fanny Imlay (fathered by Gilbert Imlay), not Mary Shelley (fathered by William Godwin). Wollstonecraft did not marry Imlay because she believed their commitment went beyond legality. Imlay did not share this commitment or belief, causing Wollstonecraft great pain. In addition, women won the vote in England in 1918 and in the United States in 1920. I was thus confused by Stansell's statement that the vote was won in 1919. While these may be minor corrections, I believe that women's history is significant enough to be presented without such errors.

CAROLE LEVIN
Lincoln, Nebraska

Christine Stansell replies:

The letter-writers are correct about Mary Shelley's out-of-wedlock conception and legitimate birth, but my point still holds. The facts about both pregnancies, and Wollstonecraft's illicit liaisons with Imlay and Godwin, were widely known: the grief-stricken Godwin, intent on upholding his wife's image as proud transgressor of convention, published them in a memoir after her death. The resulting sexual scandal pushed Wollstonecraft and her book outside the pale of re-

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spectable opinion for nearly a century.

As for the Nineteenth Amendment, the U.S. House of Representatives passed it in 1918; the Senate, in 1919; the last state ratified it in 1920, when it went into effect.

Mouse traps

To the editors:

Arthur Allen suggests in "Mighty Mice" (August 10) that the patent system stifles valuable research by placing corporations and their lust for profits in the path of scientific progress. While control of patent rights certainly can be a useful engine for generating enviable balance sheets, Allen has failed to acknowledge the full story. While decrying the fact that a license to DuPont prevents Professor Jamey Marth from freely sharing the cre-loxP mouse with his scientific peers, Allen has failed to note that DuPont most likely obtained its license by providing a substantial portion of the funding used to create this potentially lucrative rodent. Where was Allen when DuPont's research funding provided the financial means by which this valuable invention could occur? Would it change Allen's opinion to know that for every blockbuster product developed from university research using corporate funds, dozens of lines of inquiry turn out to have little, if any, commercial (or even scientific) value? Is it Allen's position that, in an era of dwindling public funding, corporations should finance university labs but reap no benefits?

Numerous courts have recognized, and the patent statute authorizes, an exemption to use a patented invention for nonprofit research purposes. However, the research must be solely for pure scientific inquiry and not be intended, ultimately, to lead to commercial products.

Of course Professor Marth's colleagues want access to the cre-loxP mouse, and they may use it for basic research. But, if the mouse provides the means by which they develop a successful diagnostic or treatment method, why shouldn't DuPont, the entity whose financial strength made such a mouse possible, receive a portion of the benefits it provides?

DAVID B. BERNSTEIN
Boston, Massachusetts

Arthur Allen replies:

My article was not a denunciation of patents or patenting. It described a current phenomenon of overzealous patenting and restrictive licenses that, in the opinion of many renowned scientists, threatens to distort biomedical research. Although DuPont now appears to be reaching an agreement with researchers over the cre-loxP mouse, its original position was a perfectly good case in point—indeed, it provoked the head of NIH into ordering a study of problems with intellectual property. Whatever lawyers have decided about DuPont's ownership of the cre-loxP mouse, it is my understanding from talking to scientists that DuPont's researchers were not the only ones whose work was key to the creation of the mouse. Despite this, DuPont sought not merely royalties but control over all products arising from the experimental uses of the creature—an untenable demand on the institutions whose researchers wanted to use the mouse.

Unkind words

To the editors:

I love TNR, but every time I see the term "Bimbroglio" I wince. It ends up cruelly mocking Monica Lewinsky, instead of putting the focus where it belongs, on Clinton. "Bimbo" is an ugly word, implying stupidity, vapidity, tight spandex, and too much makeup. A man cannot be a bimbo. It's a word that puts down women and blames them for sexual chaos. Not nice.

DEBORAH PLUMER
Brooklyn, New York

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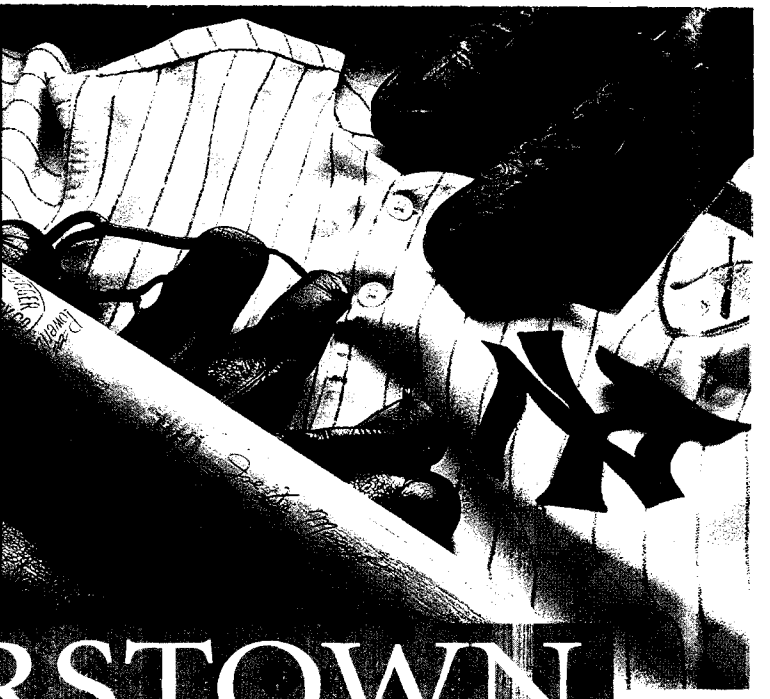

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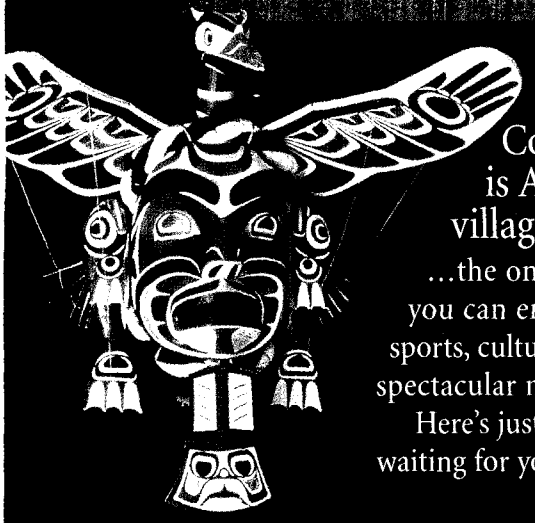

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

OCTOBER 5, 1998

AS THE WORLD CHURNS

Isolationism comes in many forms. There are doctrines and strategies that withdraw the United States from the affairs of the world: the stuff of the great American debates on foreign policy and national security policy. But there is also a form of isolationism that has nothing to do with policy, a withdrawal from the world that is owed not to doctrines and strategies, or even to the realities of power, but to the obsession of the United States, and of the government of the United States, with itself. We seem to be in precisely such a season of self-obsession. And the world, or an alarmingly large part of it, is cracking up around us.

It is not simply ironic that Russia should be breaking down and reversing its difficult march toward democracy and capitalism; that Saddam Hussein should be reneging on his commitment to the international inspection of his capabilities for mass destruction more brazenly than he has before; that Islamic terrorists should be newly emboldened to proceed with their bloody war against Americans and American installations; that Slobodan Milosevic should be prosecuting a war against the Albanians of Kosovo that leaves in its wake a humanitarian catastrophe; that the economy of Japan should be in an almost unimaginable shambles; that North Korea should be starving its own population while attempting to launch satellites, proceeding with its export of advanced missile technology, and continuing its nuclear blackmail of the United States and South Korea; that India and Pakistan should be giddily escalating the nuclear arms race in their wretched region; that the world's financial crisis should be threatening to spread to Latin America. It is not simply ironic that all these threats and crises and disasters should be taking place at precisely the moment that the United States, and especially the men and women who govern it, should be thinking and talking about almost nothing except the sexual misadventures and the ethical miscreancies of Bill Clinton. It is also dangerous. The fate of the president is not the same thing as the fate of the United States or the fate of the planet, even if it seems that way to him. The appetites of Bill Clinton—and the public investigation of them—are not adequate justifications for the deterioration of American foreign policy.

There are Americans who observe the global breakdown and feel lucky: the United States never seemed more exceptional than it seems now. They point out that we have peace and we have prosperity. Indeed, they say, our carnival of scandal is itself a measure of our privileged position in the world: we can afford, as a nation, to dwell on the unconventional uses of a cigar. But this is foolish. We may be lucky, but we are not all there is. Our good fortune does not altogether insulate us from the ill fortune all around us. Quite the contrary: This is, after all, the golden age of globalization, though it doesn't feel quite golden anymore. The vicissitudes of the ruble and the yen may yet be experienced in Peoria.

Consider what happened in Russia while Washington was lingering over the details of how a certain dress acquired a certain stain. What happened in Russia was nothing less than the restoration of reform communism. This was marked by the ascendancy of Yevgeny Primakov, who became Boris Yeltsin's prime minister on September 11. He rose to power because the Communists in the Duma insisted that the weakened Yeltsin appoint him—because he represents a return to the policies and the personnel of the Soviet Union. No, not all the policies, but certainly a recoil from the free market (even the gangsterish free market) of Russia in the 1990s and toward a more statist economic policy. Primakov is himself an old KGB man. It is no wonder that he enjoyed the support of the Communists, who for weeks had been acting on the cynical Leninist axiom that things won't get better until they get worse. Primakov is not a Communist ideologue—he is, rather, a man of no principles or beliefs whatsoever. But he is a Communist practitioner—a believer in state power and a centralized polity in the old Brezhnev way,

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which is bad enough. From the standpoint of American foreign policy, moreover, he is truly a fiend, a proven ally of Saddam and Milosevic, who has already been permitted by this administration to thwart American objectives in the Gulf and the Balkans—always in the guise of helping us.

The rise of Primakov represents a challenge to the central assumptions of American policy toward Russia: the shallow optimism about democratic capitalism in the aftermath of the Soviet Union and the stubborn fixation on Boris Yeltsin that characterized the Talbottism of recent years. But the capital is not engaged in a great debate about Talbottism. It is engaged in a great debate about the definition of sexual relations. We are entering the post-post-cold-war world in a state of near-total distraction. If isolationism means, in part, a loss of American attention to the rest of the world, then Monica Lewinsky has made isolationists of us all. In the VX laboratories in Iraq, however, they have their minds on their work. •

NOTEBOOK

DRIVE-BY SMEARING: It's hard to be too sympathetic when the White House complains about the salacious details in the Starr report. After all, the president was reckless enough to provide his enemies with such fodder, and his dodgy answers were provocative enough to give Ken Starr a justification for documenting it. But, in his effort to impeach Bill Clinton, Starr also managed to besmirch a few bystanders, most notably Eleanor Mondale, an entertainment reporter for "CBS This Morning" and daughter of former Vice President Walter Mondale. According to the report, she was visiting Clinton in the Oval Office one Saturday morning—when Monica Lewinsky came a-calling. After Lewinsky was told that Clinton was too busy to see her and after a Secret Service agent told her Mondale was in the White House, the former intern put two and two together, threw a fit, and stormed back to her apartment. What was the purpose of including this episode, portentously referred to as "The Northwest Gate Incident," in the Starr Report? Apparently to imply that Mondale, an attractive woman often described as "leggy" in the gossip columns, was paying the president more than just a friendly visit. And, if Starr's wink-and-nudge approach in the text of his report doesn't get that point across, just go to the footnotes. There he helpfully points out that the meeting between the president and Mondale took place in the now-notorious private study next to the Oval Office and that Lewinsky suspected that "Mondale was romantically involved with the president." He quotes Lewinsky, from the Linda Tripp tapes, wishfully thinking, "Maybe she's not sleeping with him yet." So, thanks to Starr—and to the House of Representatives, which, in rushing Starr's report onto the Internet, didn't bother to black out the names of parties peripheral to the essential story—Mondale has now had to issue a statement denying any romantic involvement with the president. It's a wonder the independent counsel didn't find some way to bring Sharon Stone into the story.

HURRY HOLBROOKE: This magazine has had its share of tart remarks to make about Richard Holbrooke, the not-so-camera-shy diplomat who, as assistant secretary of state for European and Canadian affairs, brokered the Bosnian peace known as the Dayton Accord. But one thing none of Holbrooke's critics has thought to suggest is that he is financially corrupt—after all, his eager return to the Clinton administration means a huge cut in pay from his previous work on Wall Street. No one has suggested it, that is, until now. Holbrooke's nomination as America's ambassador to the United Nations is being held up amid charges that he failed to report his one-year, rent-free residence in the Washington home of Democratic donor Larry Lawrence as a gift. Holbrooke later endorsed Lawrence's phony request to be buried in Arlington Cemetery based on nonexistent Merchant Marine service. The Justice Department is also looking into allegations that, while serving as a special envoy to Cyprus subsequent to his stint as assistant secretary, he asked U.S. embassies in Europe to help set up meetings with governments for his Wall Street employer, in purported violation of a one-year lobbying ban for former officials. As for the first charge, Holbrooke has amended his financial disclosure form to reflect the free lodging as a gift, and his endorsement of Lawrence for Arlington only proves that Holbrooke was one of many high officials the late fat cat bamboozled. We have no idea if the second charge is true, but, even if it is, it strikes us as pretty small beer—not the sort of stuff that should disqualify a man who, however abrasive he may be, also deserves credit for one of the few tangible accomplishments of the Clinton administration's diplomacy. The U.N. post is vitally important; it stands empty; Holbrooke is effective. That argues for a swift conclusion to the Justice Department's investigation, and, upon the probable finding that Holbrooke committed no serious wrongdoing, his prompt confirmation by the Senate.

HOME NEWS: With this issue, TNR proudly adds a distinguished name to its roster of senior editors: Gregg Easterbrook. Gregg's writings on everything from defense policy to health care to the environment have appeared in *U.S. News & World Report*, *Newsweek*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *The Atlantic Monthly*, where he is a contributing editor. Gregg is also the author of *A Moment on Earth: The Coming Age of Environmental Optimism*, which *The New York Times Book Review* said "deserves to be read, investigated, argued about, and honored." We are confident Gregg's contributions to these pages will fit that description, too. •

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NEW YORK POSTCARD

SMALL TAWK

By Mark Francis Cohen

Sitting in his cluttered Manhattan office, Sam Chwat, accent coach to the stars, is holding court with one of his not-so-famous clients in what amounts to a public flogging. The subject of the flogging is an upwardly mobile woman with short, chestnut-colored hair and a knit sweater wrapped around her shoulders, who has come here to eliminate her cumbersome Brooklyn accent. Every session costs $185, but it's worth it, she says, for a chance to learn from the man who once tutored—and cured—Tony Danza.

Chwat (whose name, he tells me, is pronounced Sh-wah but is usually mispronounced by New Yorkers as Sh-whaat?) implores the woman to begin chatting about her children just so he can pounce on every offensive sound she emits. Soon, in the middle of her sixth attempt to say "six-yeehs-huld" like a Midwesterner, Chwat erupts: "Wai, wai, wait! You're screwing it up. If you pucker, it's going to screw it up. A puckered 's' is going to give you a 'sh.' Like 'In the office she . . .' try *that*—without puckering."

"In-thuh-aw-fish-she," she gurgles.

"I need an 's,'" he chimes.

"In the aw-fis-she."

"That's it! And—"

"Six-yeers-old."

"You got it, and she had a list of what?"

"She hadda lish ah. . . ."

"Don't pucker!"

"She hadda lish ah quesh-chuns."

"You blew it!"

Slowly, she says: "She had a list of quest-chuns."

"You're right!" Later, Chwat declares: "It's important to note she doesn't have a lisp. This is just a local thing."

Of course, Brooklynese is more than a local thing. It is perhaps the most recognizable regionalism in the world, thanks mainly to movies and television, which have transformed it into an emblem of class as much as of place. Yet, in the borough of Brooklyn, of all places, Brooklynese is suddenly on the brink of extinction or at least some serious evolution—thanks to the old ethnic Brooklynites, who no longer want to speak it, and to the new ethnic Brooklynites, who are changing it beyond recognition.

Of course, it was ethnic groups that created Brooklynese in the first place. First it was the early Dutch and French settlers, trying to learn English after the British captured Brooklyn in 1664. These groups, which already had trouble pronouncing the King's "th"s, assumed the Cockney sounds around them—and that meant eliminating the final "r" in many words, just like the colonists. And so the ancestors of Brooklyn's mudduhs were born.

In the 1840s, Irish immigrants added a muscularity to the dialect. The Irish tongue made "th"s into hard "t"s and "ir"s into "oi"s—thirty-third became "toity-tird." Turn-of-the-century Italian immigrants found the Brooklyn tone flat and flavorless, devoid of rhythm, and so they imbued the vowels with a sing-songy passion. Thus, "mayyn." But—whoops!—they robbed some words of their consonants. Ergo, "tawwk." Meanwhile, Jews speaking Yiddish were arriving in droves, striking new intonation riffs as well as word substitutions. Declarative sentences sounded like questions? Wordsrantogether, and "v"s replaced "w"s. Ultimately, on a steamy summer day, as kids played stickball and fire hydrants sprayed water on the streets below, it was not uncommon to hear an apartment dweller produce a hands-in-the-air wail of "Oh-pin-duh-vinda-awe-red-de!"

By 1950, Brooklynese had become nationally recognized—and derided. According to Margaret Mannix Flynn, a former professor of speech at Brooklyn College who is generally considered the doyenne of Brooklynese, the advent of radio, movies, and television would, oddly enough, diminish its real use. For one thing, whenever a movie character invoked the Brooklyn warble, Flynn observes, "he was always the poor schlump. And he spoke the language that the average guy and gal could identify with." Meanwhile, radio and television broadcasts were entering more homes. To the extent that news segments were suddenly being heard and seen all over, announcers had to be starkly accentless and regionally unspecific. With this need for crushing universality, a standard American English was born—the so-called newscaster's speech. Whereas Brooklynites once took pride in the fraternity of the accent, people now understood it to be a feature of the working class, an association that sticks to this day. As the borough's aspiring eggheads and social climbers became conscious of the accent's symbolism, they decided to rid themselves—and their children—of it. In the ensuing years, as the aspiring middle class fled to the suburbs of Long Island and New Jersey, a new wave of Southern blacks and Puerto Ricans took their place and made their own mark. Spanish, for example, has pushed the accent in a different direction—providing us with the quick, guttural sounds we have today.

Not that Brooklynese has lost all of its familiar features: it's still blind to things like final "r"s and, in some of the neighborhoods, still home to "youse," as in "youse guyz." Yet, given the dizzying variety of Brooklyn's new immigrants—remember, it's not just Hispan-

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ics, but Russians, Chinese, Dominicans, Jamaicans, and Haitians, too—most linguistic experts predict it's only a matter of time before traditional Brooklynese morphs into something wholly different. "It's dying," announces William Stewart, a linguist at the CUNY Graduate Center. "Any place you have immigration, differences are created; and, as children interact, these differences get leveled off, and a new variety is formed."

A week has passed since the session in Sam Chwat's office. Alan Rodin, a speech pathologist who teaches accent elimination, is giving me a tour of Brighton Beach, which is now predominantly Russian. He's conducting an informal survey of how young people speak, and at one point near the boardwalk he approaches an eleven-year-old boy who has brown hair, deeply set blue eyes, and a down-to-his-knees black T-shirt. When the boy confirms his Russian origins, Rodin flashes a clipboard and asks, "Would you read these words for me?"

"Sure," the boy says in a formal-sounding English, as he glances up at the page and ticks off the answers. "Three. Dog. Soda. Water. Give me this."

"Have you ever heard someone say 'dis' instead of 'this?'" Rodin asks.

"Well, sure," he says. "You know—dis! Don't 'dis' me."

"Oh boy," Rodin says, shaking his head. "There's not going to be a Brooklynese for long."

MARK FRANCIS COHEN is a New York-based freelance journalist who formerly covered Brooklyn for *The New York Times.*

ON THE HILL

SAINT LEWIS

By David Grann

Last Thursday morning, as House Democrats met on the third floor of the Cannon office building to discuss the fate of the president, some in the rank and file were so dispirited they didn't even show up. One, Jim Traficant of Ohio, complained that the president was on Viagra. Others were already talking about resignation and retribution. "It's indefensible," said Jim Moran of Virginia. "If he committed perjury, then I'm voting for impeachment," added Representative Gene Taylor of Mississippi.

Then, in the midst of this disarray, John Lewis suddenly rose from his seat. As one of the party's deputy whips, the Georgia congressman, who led the first Freedom Rides through the South in the 1960s and was beaten by segregationists so many times that his head still has a dent in it, was in charge of rounding up and counting votes. More important, as the party's conscience, he was in charge of lending moral credibility to their cause. "We cannot be fair-weather friends," he told his colleagues. "You have to believe in forgiveness; you have to believe in the process of redemption; you have to believe that people who make mistakes can grow and change." He paused, then continued, in his Southern voice. "Let those without sin cast the first stone. We're all in the same boat. We're all saved by the grace of God."

Even some Democrats who disagreed nodded their heads, as if at a revival meeting. After all, Lewis is not your typical Clinton apologist. He sacrificed his body in modern America's highest moral cause (without ever taking a poll). He spent his twenty-first birthday in jail after trying to integrate a movie theater in Nashville, Tennessee. On a Freedom Ride in 1961, he was hit over the head with a wooden Coca-Cola crate as he boarded a bus. And, one spring day in 1965, as he marched into Selma, Alabama, he refused to resort to violence even as state troopers beat him unconscious with billy clubs. "John Lewis always knew what he was about," Andrew Young, one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s inner circle, recently told *People* magazine. "He was out to redeem the soul of America."

As such, Lewis may be one of the few men in politics who can redeem Bill Clinton. The president, who has used up both his friends and his moral authority and even depleted his once-invincible war room, seems to understand this. Last month, before a ceremony in Martha's Vineyard commemorating the thirty-fifth anniversary of the historic civil rights march on Washington, Clinton sought out Lewis's counsel on how to handle the spiraling scandal. After Lewis told him to repent, Clinton not only offered his first in a long series of semi-apologies but cited Lewis's new memoir, *Walking With the Wind*, as he addressed the crowd. "[T]he people of conscience never left the house," the president declared, reading from the prologue. "They never ran away. They stayed, they came together, and they did the best they could, clasping hands and moving toward the corner of the house that was the weakest."

A few days later, Clinton invited the congressman to the White House, where, over coffee and Danish, he apologized again to a group of Democratic leaders. "I can see in his eyes he's hurting," Lewis said afterward. "He is a father, a husband, and a man...."

The sinner was moving closer to the saint.

Now, as Lewis emerged from the Democratic caucus room, he sounded almost like James Carville. "Four years and more than forty million dollars and what you're dealing with is the president's sexual appetites," he told a knot of press. How did he know there wasn't more evidence in the report? "We met with the president on Wednesday, and

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Is Truth a Casualty of the Drug War?

McCaffrey Myths?	The Facts.
"There is not a shred of scientific evidence that shows that smoked marijuana is useful or needed. This is not science. This is not medical. This is a cruel hoax." **Gen. Barry McCaffrey, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (Drug Czar), Aug. 16, 1996.**	"Smoked marijuana has been shown to lower intraocular eye pressure (IOP) in subjects with normal IOP and patients with glaucoma. . . Clinical studies and survey data in health populations have shown a strong relationship between marijuana use and increased eating. . . Inhaled marijuana has the potential to improve chemotherapy-related nausea and vomiting." National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), *Workshop on the Medical Utility of Marijuana,* 1997
"In the view of the nation's scientific and medical community, marijuana has a high potential for abuse and no generally accepted therapeutic value." **Gen. Barry McCaffrey, July 22, 1997**	"Federal authorities should rescind their prohibition of the medicinal use of marijuana for seriously ill patients and allow physicians to decide which patients to treat." *New England Journal of Medicine,* January 30, 1997
"Marijuana is also a gateway drug." **Gen. Barry McCaffrey, July 22, 1997**	For every 104 people who have used marijuana, there is only one regular user of cocaine and less than one heroin addict. Department of HHS, *National Household Survey on Drug Abuse,* 1997
"The murder rate in Holland is double that in the United States . . . That's drugs." **Gen. Barry McCaffrey, 1995 Stats, July 23, 1998**	The Dutch homicide rate in 1995 was ¼ that of the United States (1.8 vs. 8.0). FBI, Uniform Crime Reports/Dutch Bureau of Statistics
"(Needle Exchange) programs are magnets for all social ills — pulling in crime, violence, addicts, prostitution, dealers, and gangs and driving out hope and opportunity." **Gen. Barry McCaffrey, April 24, 1998**	"A meticulous scientific review has now proven that needle exchange programs can reduce the transmission of HIV and save lives without losing ground in the battle against illegal drugs." Donna Shalala, Secretary of HHS, April 20, 1998
"Methadone is one of the longest-established, most thoroughly evaluated forms of drug treatment. The science is overwhelming in its findings about methadone treatment's effectiveness." **Gen. Barry McCaffrey, July 24, 1998**	**TRUE!**

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we took him at his word." Hadn't he already lied? "He has confessed his sins."

The next day, Lewis continued his contrition campaign, preaching in the corridors and the cloakroom: "We must forgive until it hurts and becomes painful," he said. Fearing the president was being railroaded, he voted against promptly releasing Kenneth Starr's report to the public, even though only two years ago he had vowed never to "sit down or keep silent" until Republicans released Newt Gingrich's ethics report to the American people.

Some Democrats warned that the Party's Conscience was eroding the Party's Principles. "I don't think some members understand how serious this is," said Moran. And, as Lewis stood before the press with his hands in his pockets and his head slightly bowed, I detected a shift in the usually reverent attitude toward him—a hint of mockery. A reporter rolled his eyes, while a Republican congressman nearby groused: "Where was all the forgiveness when he was screaming for Newt to be removed for lying?"

The saint suddenly seemed like any other politician. Back home, Lewis's constituents woke up on Saturday morning to hear talk-show host Dave Stone on WGST Atlanta declaring: "John Lewis is treated like an untouchable hero in the state of Georgia. Well, I don't care. He has proven today he is just a shameless partisan hack. He's a freakin' disgrace." Alveda King, the niece of Martin Luther King Jr. and a professor at Atlanta Metropolitan College, told me Lewis had even turned a blind eye to the gospel of Jesus Christ. "Look at biblical history—with sin comes consequences," she said.

The late James McDougal, one of the president's most infamous cronies, once noted that the Clintons are like a tornado, devastating everything in their path. Yet the real toll of this scandal is not on the McDougals of the world, or the Lewinskys, or the Tripps, or the Jordans, or the Goldbergs. It is on the good men like Lewis.

For, the more I watched the six-term congressman, the more I sensed that his grant of absolution to the president was not, as his critics claimed, an act of hypocrisy—it was an expression of his most noble instincts. Lewis *was* forgiving the president, just as he now insisted to me he has forgiven Gingrich and wishes he had done so more at the time. This has always been Lewis's way, all the way back to his civil rights days, when the notion that he could peel away the ugliness in anyone—segregationists and sheriffs and Klansmen—sustained his nonviolent ideology. "There is something sacred, something pure, right, and good in everyone," he would think, even as he was spat on. In his memoir, he described how Dr. King would tell his people to embrace their enemies no matter what. "If there is hell in someone, if there is meanness and anger and hatred in him, we've got to *love* it out."

Last Monday, after George Wallace had passed away, Lewis even extended his blessing to a man who had helped maim him. "What he did as the governor of Alabama led others to engage in vicious acts of violence," he said in a statement. "Later in life, Governor Wallace became a different man. He repented from his ways and asked black Alabamans for forgiveness. For the most part, he was forgiven because he saw his mistakes.... He must be remembered as one who had the capacity to change."

On the next day, it was back to the Capitol, where Lewis's defense of a far different sort of man seemed to be winning new converts. At least for an instant, there was the sense that Lewis's goodness might transcend Clinton's ugliness. Still, I couldn't help but think back to one of our first interviews. "It's very difficult," he said. "It's painful. I don't sleep at night. I got up at four-thirty in the morning. I didn't want to face the day—to listen to the debate."

Then, as he walked off with another reporter, I could hear him saying, "Forgive, forgive, forgive...." •

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

POLLYANNAS

By Dana Milbank

Paul Glastris must be, to borrow Bob Dole's winning phrase, the most optimistic man in America. "Or the craziest," Glastris offers. For, last Tuesday, as Washington braced to see if Ken Starr's report would bring down the president, Glastris showed up for his first day of work as a speechwriter—in Bill Clinton's White House. Glastris, a former writer for *U.S. News & World Report*, knew full well that the Clinton presidency could end before his new job began, but he signed on anyway. "I thought about it a lot," he says. "I made the bet that this wouldn't tank the man."

His wager is looking slightly safer this week, at least from within the bunker known as the White House. Starr's long-awaited report, released to the world last Friday, contains—to the relief of Clintonites—nothing that is fundamentally new. Nixonian abuse-of-power accusations seem weak. Bimbroglio is again about sex.

As the first copies of the Starr report began circulating in the White House Friday afternoon, lawyers gathered in White House Counsel Charles Ruff's office to read their only copy. Clinton's advisers called a meeting that afternoon in Room 180 of the Old Executive Office Building, where they offered a pep talk to two dozen Clinton-friendly outsiders, including Jody Powell, Michael Zeldin, and Kiki Moore. The message, according to one participant: "We're going to get over this thing." By Monday, the polls, which have saved

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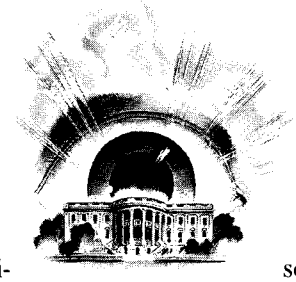
Clinton throughout Bimbroglio, once again showed his job-approval ratings still around 60 percent. At a White House meeting Tuesday, pollsters announced that the president's numbers had actually *improved*. "Every time something bad comes out, our numbers go up," marvels one White House aide.

It is far too early for Clinton aides to celebrate, of course. If another pump drops (a second intern? a presidential harem?), he's probably finished. Even if he survives, he's likely to be powerless—particularly if this fall's elections go badly. And the House Democrats Clinton needs to survive don't care about Clinton's poll numbers if their own poll numbers predict defeat.

In this White House, though, even a reduced state of panic is cause for joy. As White House aides waited last week for the Starr report, many thought the president's chance of survival was no better than 50–50. "We now at least know where the universe is," says Deputy Chief of Staff Maria Echaveste. "It was harder before with all these rumors, all this hysteria. We're at the bottom of the barrel, and we're working our way out." The pattern is familiar: A seemingly devastating development for the president is met with fevered reaction in the press and war whoops on the Hill. Then, the public demonstrates its rock-solid indifference in the polls, and, eventually, Congress and the press calm down.



If Clinton does manage to keep his job, he'll probably owe it less to House Democrats or in-house spin doctors than to Ken Starr himself. By loading his report with gratuitous material, he may have made himself look as bad as the president. (Was it necessary to mention Lewinsky's claim that Clinton told her he had "hundreds" of extramarital affairs, or his supposed remark to Lewinsky about the flavor of his notorious cigar?)

Perhaps there is, then, a logic to Clinton's chronic dishonesty: a deliberate attempt to drive his enemies into a rage, at which point they will act irrationally, giving Clinton his escape. How else to explain Starr's repeated lapses or Dan Burton's erratic behavior? That same dishonesty, however, also has commentators wondering why Clinton's advisers and appointees don't feel the same rage—and abandon their boss. Larry King, talking to Ralph Reed the other night, seemed downright incredulous.

King: Are you surprised none of them has quit, Ralph? Nobody in the White House has quit?
Reed: Not necessarily.
King: Nobody in the Cabinet?
Reed: No.
King: They were all lied to. Not to quit?
Reed: Well, I can't, of course....
King: You're not surprised?

Clinton's loyalists are, of course, disgusted with the chief. "I don't know if I'll ever believe this guy," says one adviser. "I'm very disappointed," adds one of Clinton's top lieutenants. But, thinking selfishly, White House staffers realize Clinton's moral problems don't reflect badly on them personally. At this late stage in the administration, there are few surviving true believers, the types who would be so offended they'd want out. Another reason for the apparent loyalty is Clinton's ability to create the illusion, internally, that everything's fine. Expect a reprise shortly of some of Clinton's favorites: HMO regulation, Social Security, and education.

To be sure, some Clinton faithful will be out the door anyway, but not because of scandal developments: Mike McCurry next month, aspiring North Carolina governor Erskine Bowles, and Rahm Emanuel, who yearns for the calm of his native Chicago. Donna Shalala came close to a showdown with Clinton at a Cabinet meeting, but even that celebrated event wasn't quite as fiery as portrayed. Otherwise, the Clinton White House's morale, depressed since Monica's dress reappeared in mid-summer, seems to have returned. "[The mood] seems to have picked up greatly—the president won't have to leave office," one aide says boldly, though not boldly enough to want his name attached to it. "Call me Pollyanna, but, if we're prepared to work our tushies off," another adviser says, "things will work out in the end."

Clinton strategists say it appears fairly certain there will be an impeachment inquiry, most likely followed by censure. Clinton won't resign voluntarily, and the Republican Congress, though it probably won't impeach, wants to drag the process out. The White House would happily settle for censure, though it won't say so now. "By even offering it as a possibility, that becomes the minimum punishment," an adviser says.

That's why the White House is in this silly debate over legal hairsplitting, in which Clinton's lawyers insist unconvincingly that he didn't commit perjury. His political advisers want the ruse to stop, as do Democrats on the Hill. Though Clinton isn't likely to admit publicly that he lied, because of the legal jeopardy that puts him in, the White House will try to stop talking about it. Don't expect to see Ruff or David Kendall on TV again soon.

At the same time, the expanding circle of White House scandal managers (three new ones joined the group this week) will try a two-part strategy: keep the House Judiciary Committee Democrats away from impeachment talk and keep other House Democrats away from resignation talk. They're also working to counteract Republican grandstanding, such as Congressman James Rogan's claim that Clinton's behavior "will decimate" sexual harassment laws. Casting Clinton as a sexual harasser could erode his strong support from women. That should be quite a spectacle: conservative Republicans defending sexual harassment laws, while feminists turn a blind eye to the president's behavior.

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Hypocrisy is just one of the daily delights of Bimbroglio. The scandal, as it grinds on, sullies everyone, Clinton and Starr, Democrats and Republicans. The other day I was talking on the phone with my 79-year-old grandmother, who mentioned she liked a recent story of mine. "Which story was that, Grandma?" I asked her. She replied: "The one about the semen." Makes a guy proud to be a journalist. I felt the same way on Friday, as I watched a colleague downloading the Starr report, doing searches for key words such as "vagina" and "macadamia." I felt still worse for my profession Sunday morning when George Will and Cokie Roberts hit Kendall below the belt, asking him how "Mrs. Kendall" defines "sexual relations."

I eventually shut the TV off and headed down to the Mall, where I spent the afternoon with some houseguests. We walked from the White House to the Lincoln Memorial. Hoping to find something relevant to today's crisis, I searched the engraving of Lincoln's second inaugural address for a message from the ages. "Let us judge not that we be not judged"? "Bind up the nation's wounds"? No, those sentiments seemed too weighty for these trivial times. Turning to the huge marble statue of Honest Abe, I thought the obvious: How puny our current president looks. But, also, I thought how small the rest of us are for our inability to rise above this tawdriness. •

Or, Lord William's lover.

MADAME LEWINSKY

By James Wood

The Starr report is disappointingly derivative. It is not a neutral legal account but a literary confection, dusted with detail, and sold by the pound. Though he cannot admit it, Kenneth Starr wants us to enjoy his tale, which is why his narrative clings to the shape of the nineteenth-century novel of adultery, as we know it in *Effie Briest*, *Madame Bovary*, *Anna Karenina*, and *Thérèse Raquin*.

In these novels, secrecy becomes narration, is identical with it. The attempt to hide the affair produces a drama that can only be quieted by further concealment. In general, the adulterous woman is more serious about the affair than the man, who will be something of a seducer; the woman falls in love and is then (in both senses of the word) a fallen woman. She has destroyed herself, and, because she has threatened family and social life, she must disappear: she commits suicide or withers in sickness. Such books abound in heavily symbolic detail, both of the titillating and moral kind: Emma Bovary, à la Lewinsky, smokes her lover's cigars and puts his pipe in her mouth; in D.H. Lawrence's twentieth-century version of this novel, Lady Chatterley's husband is wheelchair-bound (and thus sexually crippled).

Emile Zola follows this pattern in *Thérèse Raquin*. Laurent, the seducer, resolves only to start his affair with Thérèse when he is "certain in his own mind that he really had something to gain." He ponders what he is about to do and reflects that "it was a long time since he had last satisfied his appetites." Once the affair begins, Laurent is nervous, but "Thérèse had no such doubts. She gave herself to him unsparingly, going straight where her passion led." At one point, the cautious Laurent remonstrates with the passionate Thérèse that she is too noisy in lovemaking: "For heaven's sake ... don't make such a racket."

Kenneth Starr, our pygmy *romancier*, has jumped onto the shoulders of this tradition. His narrative abounds with detail that is legally nugatory but which furthers his moral narrative. First, by relating the entire history of the president's affair with Monica Lewinsky, he relates, in effect, a narrative of secrecy, which cannot but seem shameful, in part because secrecy is shameful. Yet much of this secrecy has no legal importance and is merely the inevitable architecture of an affair. (Just as in *Thérèse Raquin*, we learn, in one of many superfluous details in the report, that Monica makes too much noise sexually. Monica told Starr, "[W]e were both aware of the volume and sometimes ... I bit my hand—so that I wouldn't make any noise.") A subtle tone of disapproval is sounded early. All Americans, intones the report, "including the President, are entitled to enjoy a private family life...." Note "family"; of course, all kinds of privacy exist outside family life, but the report's hidden point is that the president's private life was not *family* life and should thus be legally visible to us all.

Like a nineteenth-century adulterer, Monica falls for her lover, who is calculating and appetitive: after their first sexual encounter, he tells her that "he hadn't had that [oral sex] in a long time." In the traditional literary mode, it is she who loses everything, she who is fallen, and she who must struggle to regain a place in society. During the period in which Lewinsky is trawling for a new job, the report tells us, for no apparent reason: "Around this time, Ms. Lewinsky told a friend that she was considering moving to another city or country." This strikingly recalls the idea of the fallen woman's banishment. Disgraced in Washington, she must wander like a lost soul, as Sister Carrie flees to Montreal. The clear literary strategy is to coax sympathy on behalf of Monica.

The Starr report mounts a legal case but more importantly a moral appeal, and it uses novelistic means to do so. Starr is fond of moral symbolism. The first concrete mention of the first lady does not occur until after the sixth sexual encounter, when this devastating sentence closes a section: "Mrs. Clinton was in

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Athens, Greece." The first lady's whereabouts have not been of interest to Starr until this moment. But her sheer distance from the White House, her placement in the cradle of Western civilization, and the fact that she is not the first lady but "Mrs. Clinton," a *wife*—the literary argument is made compactly. Mrs. Clinton is, to the president, a woman of no importance, quite discarded. Oh, the grandeur that was Greece!

In a similar vein, we are told that one of the sexual encounters occurred "on Easter Sunday, April 7, 1996," though the detail is legally irrelevant: the couple defiled Easter. The report notes several times—and repetition is one of Starr's techniques—that the president and Lewinsky began their relationship during "the government shutdown." Thus the relationship occurred when government was derelict, when government itself was absent, and Starr makes this a pattern in his report, suggesting again and again that the president was not really a president during this period but a randy dog with too much time for kicking around the alley. He tells Monica that he is "usually around on the weekends," as if he might ordinarily be weekending in Manhattan. Starr is obsessive about how infrequently Clinton is telephoned. He had "no telephone calls" between 3:36 p.m. and 4:45 p.m. on February 4, no calls between 12:19 p.m. and 12:42 p.m. on the nineteenth of the same month. On the evening of Thursday, February 28, he had no telephone calls from 5:48 to 7:07. He called Monica for an hour and a half on October 10. And so on. The most powerful man in the world appears to have much more time on his hands than, say, Monica Lewinsky does.

The president, we must infer from this narrative, was crippled *as a president*, and indeed Starr belabors the point symbolically, noting—quite gratuitously, in legal terms—that, in the final sexual encounter, the president was "on crutches, the result of a knee injury in Florida two weeks earlier." This detail is literally and figuratively effective—emblematically repulsive. (Yet, in narrative terms, the president must be both stripped of his office and yet retain enough prestige that the idea of dereliction still has force; thus, Clinton is called only "the president" throughout. And, though Monica's "vagina" is mentioned several times, the president only ever has "genitals.")

Indeed, Bill Clinton is a better witness than Kenneth Starr could have imagined. Since it is Clinton's manner to consider every possibility, to feel every emotion, he expresses every possible calibration of feeling about the affair. We identify with him. All Starr has to do is quote Clinton against himself. In some senses, Clinton becomes the reader of this text. When we feel wariness about Monica (do we trust her?), Clinton puts the words into our mouths (as it were). When we get bored with Monica, Clinton obligingly gets bored, too, and banishes her for nine months. When we feel shame, Clinton does, too. One morning, for instance, he wakes Monica with a telephone call at 6:40 a.m., they have phone sex, and then Clinton says, perhaps guiltily: "What a way to start a day." These are the reader's thoughts exactly.

BILL CLINTON AND MONICA LEWINSKY
BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The nineteenth-century novel of adultery, on which Starr's report is so parasitic, achieves its greatness through a tension: on the one hand, it believes in and upholds the law, and generally punishes its amorous malefactors with death and disgrace. On the other hand, it has a sympathy with its lovers, with their banality and hot wrongdoings, which works to subvert the very upholding of the law. The Starr report may work rather similarly. We feel a kind of sympathy for both of the lovers because of their dirty reality in the narrative. In this sense, though it is hardly Kenneth Starr's intention, the narration of so much banal and vulgar detail may work against him. Instead of prosecuting a case, his narrative enacts a drama, and makes sympathetically banal what might have been merely illegal. •

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Zion's justice

A century ago, Theodor Herzl and a few hundred delegates convened in a crowded hall in Basel, Switzerland, and emerged with a plan. Today the State of Israel is not a plan. It is a nation. It seeks to encompass within its 799 miles of border the Zionist's dream. Many people across the world have contributed to the realization of that dream, among them three members of the Supreme Court of the United States: Louis D. Brandeis, Felix Frankfurter, and Robert Jackson.

Justice Brandeis did not become actively involved in Jewish causes until he was well over 50 years old. He had come from Kentucky, from an assimilated Jewish family. His uncle, Lewis Naphtall Dembitz, a successful lawyer and a devout Orthodox Jew, was likely responsible for Brandeis's initial understanding of the Jewish religion. This uncle's influence is suggested by the fact that the teenage Brandeis made his uncle's name—Dembitz—part of his own.

By 1910, Brandeis had become one of the nation's most powerful lawyers. He was actively associated with many progressive causes, including those of labor unions, minimum wage laws, and utilities regulation. But he had not embraced Jewish causes, and, as late as 1905, he had warned against the kind of ethnic identification associated with the use of a hyphen, as in "Catholic-American" or "Jewish-American."

Then, in 1910, he began to represent striking garment workers in New York City. His interaction with these primarily Jewish workers made a deep impression upon him and sparked his interest in Zionism. After meeting with Jacob de Haas, a former secretary to Theodor Herzl, in 1912, he joined the American Federation of Zionists and started making public remarks in support of Zionism. He spent the summer of 1914 reading intensively on Jewish topics, and, after an "emergency" meeting of American Zionists in New York City, he accepted a leadership role in the Zionist movement.

Brandeis worked enthusiastically, and with characteristic intelligence, in the service of the Zionist ideal. We can begin to understand his enthusiasm if we examine, for example, the letters to his wife about Palestine itself: "It is a wonderful country," he wrote. "What I saw of California and the Grand Canyon seemed less beautiful than the view from the Mount of Olives upon the Dead Sea and the country beyond.... Palestine has won our heart...." "Jewish life," he later said, "cannot be preserved and developed, assimilation cannot be averted, unless there be reestablished in the fatherland a center from which the Jewish spirit may radiate."

In 1917, for example, his intervention with President Wilson helped secure American support for the Balfour Declaration, thereby assuring its issuance. In 1938, not long before his death, he called upon President Roosevelt, seeking FDR's public diplomatic support for allowing more Jewish refugees to travel to Palestine. He told Frankfurter of his plan to "telephone Miss LeHand (FDR's secretary) that an expression . . . of Palestine's readiness to take one hundred thousand refugees within twelve months would be desirable." Brandeis gave in purely materialistic terms, as well: after 1912, Brandeis donated almost $600,000 (the present equivalent of several million dollars) to Jewish causes.

Today, not all of Brandeis's activities would seem appropriate for a judge. Nonetheless, there is one special reason why we still find Brandeis's contributions important. It is because Brandeis used his pen, his pocketbook, and his nationally recognized position as a distinguished member of the legal profession to make perfectly clear to American Jews, and to the world, that support for the Zionist ideal and American patriotism were perfectly compatible.

It is important to remember that Brandeis was a leader at a time when Zionism was controversial among Jews. Indeed, after Brandeis was confirmed as a member of the Supreme Court in 1916, *The New York Times*, with support from some Jewish groups, argued that Brandeis should resign from his public positions in Zionist organizations. And he did so. This opposition reflected something deeper than simple concern for judicial propriety. It reflected a widely held view that American Jews need not—and perhaps ought not—support the Zionist cause because doing so somehow might prove inconsistent with their obligations toward their own country or interfere with their participation in American civic life.

Brandeis strongly believed, however, that it was possible to be a loyal American and an enthusiastic Zionist. Consider, for example, the statement he made to a Jewish gathering in Boston's Symphony Hall. He said that "practical experience and observation have convinced me ... that, to be good Americans, we must be better Jews, and to be better Jews, we must become Zionists." He added that the "twentieth-century ideals of America have been the ideals of the Jew for more than twenty centuries. We have inherited these ideals of democracy and social justice...." He said that the "Jewish renaissance in Palestine will enable us to perform our plain duty to America." Today, there is widespread acceptance of these, or similar, conclusions. Brandeis showed that it was possible to be a good American, a good Jew, and a good Zionist.

Felix Frankfurter was Brandeis's pupil, in respect to Zionism as in respect to so much else. As a law student in 1905, Frankfurter heard Brandeis speak at the Harvard Ethics Society. Soon thereafter a friendship developed, and Frankfurter eventually became what Brandeis described as his "half-brother, half-son." After graduating from law school, Frankfurter worked in the New York U.S. attorney's office for Henry Stimson, then at the War Department, and from 1914 on (until his 1939 appointment to the Supreme Court) as a professor at Harvard Law School.

Brandeis needed an assistant to carry on his Zionist activities, particularly after he was appointed to the Court. He chose Frankfurter. Even while Brandeis was on the Court—in an act now considered highly controversial—Brandeis would deposit between $250 and $3,000 in a bank account to pay Frankfurter's expenses as he traveled throughout the country advocating causes, which

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included Zionism. Frankfurter made clear that, when he spoke, he spoke "not only as a Jew, but as one who believes in the wisdom of the policy embodied in the Palestine Mandate for the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine."

Frankfurter's own career spanned the 1930s and 1940s, when, like the rest of the world, he was confronted with anti-Semitism, fascism, World War II, and the Holocaust. It is not surprising that he began his 1943 dissent in *Barnette*, the second West Virginia flag-salute case, with the statement: "One who belongs to the most vilified and persecuted minority in history is not likely to be insensible to the freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution." Nor is it surprising that Frankfurter's attachment to Zionism was characterized by a focus upon the practical difficulties of creating a Jewish state and upon practical efforts to overcome them.

In 1919, for example, Brandeis told Frankfurter to prepare for a practical task: writing legal bequest forms "adequate in the several states" to organize an effort "to get into touch with all Jewish lawyers in America" and to try to have many Jewish clients remember Zion in their wills. That same year, he had Frankfurter travel to the Paris Peace Conference as a leading representative of American Zionists. At that time, the Emir Feisal, leader of the Arab delegation, wrote to Frankfurter, "We regard [the Zionists' goals] as moderate and proper. We will do our best ... to help them through.... We are working together for a reformed and revived Near East, and our two movements complete one another.... Indeed, I think that neither can be a real success without the other."

Twelve years later, with considerable practical perspicacity, Frankfurter wrote:

> Jew and Arab are collaborating in the thousand intimacies of their common life as builders of a new country.... There is no easy road, no magic formula for the achievement of that cooperation upon which depends the peace of Palestine.... Into the whole texture of Palestine life there must enter unflagging realization that Arab cannot dominate Jew, nor Jew Arab, and that only in a fellowship of reciprocal rights and reciprocal duties can be realized the distinctive values to civilization of Jew and Arab.

During the fateful years of World War II, Frankfurter remained in close touch with the Roosevelt administration. He would send views, ideas, and information to Henry Stimson, to David Niles (FDR's liaison to the Jewish community), and to FDR himself. According to Philip Elman, then his law clerk, this Frankfurter "channel" made up part of the effort to help the Jewish cause. Among the many frequent visitors to Frankfurter's office at that time were Stephen Wise and David Ben-Gurion. Using Frankfurter's grandmother's Yiddish, Elman says that Frankfurter was a *koch loffle*—a cooking spoon—who would stir up and transmit ideas, his own and those of others, such as those of his Zionist visitors.

In 1947 came one important practical achievement. With the help of his Supreme Court colleague Frank Murphy, who had previously been governor general of the Philippines, Frankfurter successfully helped to persuade the Philippines' United Nations delegate to cast a critical vote in favor of establishing the State of Israel. He later gave Murphy a copy of Chaim Weizmann's book with the inscription, "Frank Murphy, in token of his part in a great historic event, with the warm regards of F.F."

One cannot speak of Zionism and the creation of Israel without reference to the Holocaust. And I want, in this regard, to refer to the contribution made by one other member of our Court, Robert Jackson, who was not a Jew. In 1946, Jackson took leave from the Court to organize the Nuremberg trials, where he worked as chief prosecutor of the Nazi war criminals. He described his own work there as the most important experience of his life, "infinitely more important than my work on the Supreme Court or ... anything that I did as attorney general." He compiled an evidentiary record, as he said, with such authenticity and in such detail that "there can be no responsible denial of these crimes in the future and no tradition of martyrdom of the Nazi leaders can arise among informed people." He also helped to set a precedent—that nations will not ignore the most barbarous acts of other nations. And today that precedent, while far from perfectly followed, is not totally without force, even in respect to a nation's own past.

Jackson did not see Nuremberg and the allies' "submis[sion] of their captive enemies to the judgement of the law" as an answer to the Holocaust—for there is no answer to what he called "wrongs ... so calculated, so malignant, and so devastating that civilization cannot tolerate their being ignored." Rather, he saw the Nuremberg trials as a recognition of that which is decent and civilized in human nature, a "tribute that Power" will pay "to Reason." That connection between the trial and what went before it is similar to the emotion we feel today when, emerging from a visit to the Holocaust Memorial Museum, deeply depressed about the potential for evil that exists in human nature, we suddenly remember that the Holocaust story is not the whole story. We recall that there is much in human nature that remains a cause for optimism.

The creation of Israel, like the trials that sought justice, was a reminder of the best of human aspirations, a symbol of our hope. The work of these three justices, then, embodies elements of the modern Zionist ideal that extend beyond the central notion of return to a land. These include the universal aspiration toward "democracy and social justice," as Brandeis pointed out. They include the practical need for "collaboration" between Jew and Arab, as Frankfurter wrote. And they include the effort to embody in human institutions those civilizing human aspirations—aspirations toward reason, justice, law, and hope itself—that Jackson's work exemplified.

The Zionist ideal is, of course, exactly that—an ideal. It is an objective toward which imperfect reality must struggle. But, whatever the imperfections of reality, this ideal retains its hold upon our imagination and that of the world.

STEPHEN J. BREYER

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Kenneth Starr's case against himself.

A CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS

By Jeffrey Rosen

"There is Substantial and Credible Information that President Clinton Committed Acts that May Constitute Grounds for an Impeachment," Kenneth Starr declares in his report to Congress. But the independent counsel does not explain how, precisely, he has decided to define "acts that may constitute grounds for an impeachment." Starr clearly believes that impeachable offenses are not limited to violations of criminal law, since he includes acts, ranging from bathroom trysts to more formal exercises of executive privilege, that not even he suggests are illegal. But, although Starr has concluded that not all impeachable acts are necessarily criminal, he also seems to have concluded that all criminal acts are potentially impeachable, whether or not ordinary prosecutors would pursue them.

The Framers of the Constitution had a different view, holding that high crimes and misdemeanors were, at the core, political offenses that subverted the constitutional structures of government. Judged by this standard, the case against the independent counsel is stronger than the case against the president of the United States.

The most expansive definition of the impeachment power was made famous by Gerald Ford. "An impeachable offense," Ford said memorably, "is whatever a majority of the House of Representatives considers it to be at a given moment in history." But, except in a purely descriptive sense, this has to be wrong. When Supreme Court justices joke that "the Constitution is whatever we say it is," they clearly don't mean that they are free to decide constitutional cases based purely on partisan loyalties or financial self-interest. It would be a similar usurpation of the Constitution if a Republican Congress decided to impeach and convict a Democratic president simply because his poll numbers were low or because it disagreed with his policies about gays in the military.

Another unconvincing definition was proposed by President Nixon, and rejected by Congress, during the impeachment hearings of 1974. An impeachment, Nixon suggested, is essentially a criminal proceeding, and impeachment can be justified only by proof of a crime. But this definition is both too narrow and too broad: as many have noted, not all crimes are impeachable offenses, and not all impeachable offenses are crimes. The eleventh article of impeachment in the 1868 Andrew Johnson hearings, which was the only article that Congress voted on, alleged that Johnson had denied the legitimacy of the thirty-ninth Congress and violated the Tenure of Office Act in firing his secretary of war. Neither of these charges involved crimes in the ordinary sense, and both appropriately charged the president with usurping the prerogatives of Congress. Like the Framers of the Constitution, the Reconstruction Congress rejected a penal model of impeachment, which the English Parliament had used to prosecute high officials for ordinary crimes. Instead, it saw the impeachment process as a way to hold high officials accountable for abuses of official power, illegal or not, that threatened the constitutional structure.

The most convincing interpretation of the impeachment clause flows naturally from a close reading of its text: "The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors." The word "other" indicates that high crimes and misdemeanors must consist of offenses that have the same characteristics as both bribery *and* treason. What bribery and treason have in common is that they are offenses that strike at the heart of representative democracy. When a president signs a bill in exchange for a bribe, or gives "aid and comfort" to the enemies of the United States, he's subverted the constitutional structure at its core.

So, while Kenneth Starr is right to suggest that impeachable offenses aren't necessarily criminal, he is wrong to suggest that all criminal offenses are necessarily impeachable. In the best essay written on the subject, *Impeachment: A Handbook*, published in 1974, Charles Black gave the following hypothetical example of a federal crime that clearly wouldn't rise to the level of an impeachable high crime. "Suppose a president transported a woman across a state line or even (so the Mann Act reads) from one point to another within the District of Columbia, for what is quaintly called an 'immoral purpose.'" It would be "preposter-

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ous," Black concluded, to suggest that any president could be removed on such grounds. What makes this suggestion "preposterous"? It reminds us that a crime shouldn't rise to the level of an impeachable offense unless it is "committed by public men in violation of their public trust and duties," to use Justice Story's famous formulation.

With this in mind, let's examine the "eleven possible grounds for impeachment" that Starr's report identifies. The allegations fall into four categories, in ascending order of seriousness: President Clinton lied in his own deposition in the Paula Jones case (counts one, three, four, and eight); he obstructed justice in the Jones case by trying to cover his tracks (counts five, six, seven, and nine); he attempted to "deceive, obstruct, and impede" Starr's grand jury (counts two and ten); and he "abused his constitutional authority" by his efforts to hinder, impede, and deflect possible inquiry by the Congress of the United States" (count eleven).

KENNETH STARR BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Assume, for the sake of argument, that all of Starr's factual allegations are true, even though they were made public before the president was permitted to present his side of the case. The first two categories, relating to Clinton's lies in his civil deposition and his attempts to conceal his affair from Paula Jones's lawyers, don't plausibly qualify as offenses against the structure of government. Clinton's equivocations in his civil deposition about where and when he touched Monica are indistinguishable from Black's example of the president who transports a woman across state lines for immoral purposes. Even if the president confessed tomorrow that he perjured himself in the Jones deposition, no responsible representative should consider the civil perjury a high crime or misdemeanor. The point isn't simply that no ordinary citizen would be prosecuted for lying and concealing evidence about a sexual affair that was later excluded from a civil suit that was later dismissed. The point is that purely self-protective lies about a sexual dalliance in a civil case can't be considered a violation of Clinton's public duties.

Clinton's attempts to cover his tracks in the Jones case fall into the same category. It's more reasonable, as Starr suggests, to conclude that Clinton, rather than Lewinsky, asked Betty Currie to retrieve the gifts the president had given the intern. But Clinton's overriding concern was concealing his affair from the public, not denying the Jones lawyers evidence that he knew would have been inadmissible in court and was therefore unlikely to influence the case. Even assuming that Clinton dispatched his secretary to retrieve the gifts, the Justice Department rarely prosecutes attempts to impede discovery in civil cases, and, even if ordinary citizens were prosecuted for what Clinton did, his attempts to conceal his affair in a civil suit don't threaten the structure of government. If there were convincing evidence that Clinton had used the resources of his office to persuade someone to lie under oath—if the talking points had been written by Bruce Lindsey, for example—the abuse-of-power case might be stronger. But Lewinsky has testified that she wrote the talking points herself.

Clinton's lies to the grand jury are a more serious matter. As Starr goes to pornographic lengths to demonstrate, it's hard to conclude that Clinton didn't lie when he implausibly denied that he touched Monica's breasts and genitals. Unlike the lies in the Jones deposition, his lies to the grand jury were clearly intentional and material. Moreover, perjury before an

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ordinary grand jury might be viewed as an offense against the structure of government and therefore looks more like a potentially impeachable offense. (Judge Walter Nixon, for example, was impeached in 1989 for giving false statements to a grand jury investigating allegations that he had been bribed.)

But the reason that lies before grand juries are ordinarily considered offenses against the state is that they interfere with the grand jury's decision about whether or not to bring indictments for crimes that might themselves be impeachable, as in Judge Nixon's case. Because virtually everyone believes that the president can't be indicted, it's at least arguable that any lies the president tells to a grand jury don't threaten the structure of government, as long as they relate to criminal conduct that falls below the impeachment threshold.

The perjury trap that Starr set for Clinton in the grand jury is the strongest element of the case for impeachment. Remember, however, no ordinary citizen would have been caught in a similar trap, because anyone but the president would have been free, in practice, to take the Fifth. In its disastrous decision to let the Paula Jones case proceed, the Supreme Court stressed that the president should be treated precisely like everyone else. By impeaching him for lying before a grand jury about an offense that no ordinary prosecutor would have investigated and that no ordinary citizen would have discussed under oath—and doing so without the procedural protections on which ordinary citizens rely—Congress would put the president in a far worse position than everyone else. Perhaps this is what Clinton had in mind when he mentioned that he felt like the protagonist in *Darkness at Noon*.

Aware that none of the allegations in his first ten counts makes out a clear case for an offense against the structure of government, Starr adds an eleventh count, which includes offenses that, in his view, constitute an abuse of power. This count alleges that "President Clinton abused his constitutional authority" by lying to the public and to Congress, refusing invitations to testify voluntarily, and invoking executive privilege, "all as part of an effort to hinder, impede, and deflect possible inquiry by the Congress of the United States."

The circularity of this claim is audacious. Starr seems to be saying that, as soon as an independent counsel is appointed to investigate any potentially criminal violation by the president, the president interferes with the impeachment power of Congress if he denies his guilt rather than confessing immediately. Merely to restate this claim is to show its peculiarity. It was Kenneth Starr, not Congress, who decided that the president's decision to lie about his affair in the Paula Jones case might be an impeachable offense. But what gives Starr the constitutional authority to make this decision? When he began his investigation, Starr's defenders told us endlessly that he was merely doing what "ordinary" prosecutors do when he subpoenaed bookstore receipts, summoned Secret Service agents, and called Monica Lewinsky's mother to testify against her daughter. But, unlike an ordinary prosecutor, Starr has not brought a criminal indictment; instead, he has submitted a report to Congress that describes, in the least flattering light possible, legal but embarrassing conduct that no ordinary prosecutor would make public, only to conclude that Clinton's failure to cooperate with Starr's own investigation is itself grounds for impeachment.

In a forthcoming article in the *Georgetown Law Journal*, Julie O'Sullivan, a former prosecutor in the Whitewater investigation, concludes that the independent counsel's statutory power to submit impeachment referrals to Congress highlights the profound ways in which the office threatens to unsettle our constitutional structure. By allowing a special prosecutor appointed by judges to make an essentially political decision about which crimes rise to the level of impeachable offenses, the House has delegated the core of its impeachment duties. By turning independent counsels into impeachment investigators for the House, Congress has access to the powers of a criminal investigation that are normally denied to it, while allowing Starr, its nominal agent, to operate without the institutional and political checks that are supposed to constrain the impeachment process. The result is a constitutional aberration: a politically unaccountable and unconstrained officer who combines the functions of prosecutor, legislator, judge, and jury.

There was a reason that the Framers divided the impeachment process, which is a complicated blend of legal and political judgment, between the House and the Senate. The decision to accuse would be made by the House, representing the people, and the decision to convict would be made by the Senate, representing the nation. The Supreme Court was explicitly kept out of the picture, as Hamilton explained in *Federalist 65*, because "the awful discretion which a court of impeachments must necessarily have to doom to honor or to infamy the most confidential and the most distinguished characters of the community forbids the commitment of the trust to a small number of persons."

The independent counsel law, we can now see more clearly than ever, has dramatically altered that delicate balance. Representing no broader constituency than the judges who appointed him, Kenneth Starr has used the apparatus of criminal law to trap a flawed and reckless president into lies about sex. He has pressured the House to respond to the charges, despite opposition to impeachment by the people of the United States. And he has ensured that the hearings will be focused on technical violations of criminal law that have no obvious connection to the president's official duties, which was precisely the vision that the Framers rejected. The Lewinsky affair is not a sex scandal. It is, in fact, a constitutional crisis. And, if this president falls, our structure of government will be altered, with consequences that are now beyond our power to imagine. •

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How Washington worsened Asia's crash.

THE CONFIDENCE GAME

By Paul Krugman

Even in private, officials at the International Monetary Fund and the U.S. Treasury Department still think that they did the right thing on Asia and that their medicine will eventually work. And they do have some favorable numbers to cling to: interest rates in South Korea and Thailand have been dropping, and, with the exception of Indonesia, the collapse in output—devastating as it has been—is no worse than that of Mexico in 1995. But most people outside Washington's corridors of power are far less sanguine: they are all too aware that, at every point in this crisis, the real consequences of financial turmoil have been worse than anyone anticipated and that, in recent weeks, the crisis, far from being contained, has appeared to be spreading, especially to the hitherto largely immune economies of Latin America.

The human and economic costs of the slump are self-evident, as is the damage to Western influence. Less attention, however, has been paid to the effects of this crisis on the credibility of America's economic policy-making establishment. So it is not too soon to make sure that the story of what went wrong is told the right way.

Here is how I fear the story will get told: The best and the brightest—the smartest economists in America—went to Washington; they applied orthodox economic analysis to Asia; and the result was disaster. So, from now on, let's ignore the advice of economists and rely on businessmen, or journalists, or, at least, somebody without intellectual pretensions to make economic policy.

This story is half-right. The best and the brightest did indeed go to Washington. Never before in history, as far as I can tell, have so many first-rate academic economists held so many high policy positions. (Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers and his team, in particular, are an unprecedented group of all-stars.) But they did not apply orthodox economic analysis. On the contrary, from the very beginning of the crisis, the response from Washington has been to throw away the textbooks. If orthodoxy has been applied, it has been that of bankers, not economists.

Why? Because, from the beginning, Washington's preoccupation has been not economic fundamentals but market confidence. And what does it take to restore confidence? Policies that may not make sense in and of themselves but that policymakers believe will appeal to the prejudices of investors—or, in some cases, that they believe will appeal to what investors believe are the prejudices of their colleagues.

Whatever one's views about the ultimate causes of the Asian crisis, the proximate cause—the shock that turned miracle into debacle—is not in dispute: the global capital market did it. Right up to the eve of the crisis, Asian economies could, in the eyes of people with money to invest, do no wrong. In 1996 alone, foreign banks lent the countries now in crisis more than $100 billion, and nonbank investors poured in tens of billions more. These enormous inflows of capital allowed Asian countries to spend far more than their incomes. In the second half of 1997, however, those same banks called in more than $50 billion worth of loans.

Now suppose that you were to buy a copy of the best-selling textbook on international economics. What would it tell you about how to cope with such a sudden loss of confidence by international investors? Well, not much. (Trust me—I'm the coauthor of that textbook.) But, to the extent that it does offer an answer, it suggests that the affected country should try to roll with the punch: let its currency decline, maybe even cut interest rates to keep the economy from slumping. That, after all, is what the United States did in 1985, when markets finally began to wonder whether the mounting trade deficits of the early Reagan years could be sustained forever. We cheerfully let the dollar slide from 240 yen to 140, from three Deutsche marks to 1.8; the Fed even helped the process along by cutting interest rates; and the U.S. economy continued to expand.

When the Asian crisis struck, however, the response that Washington urged on the afflicted nations—and demanded as a condition for emergency IMF loans—was very different. True, countries were not told to defend their exchange rates at all costs: the baht, the won, and the rupiah were allowed to slide against the dollar. But countries were told to raise interest rates, not cut them, in order to persuade some foreign investors to keep their money in place and thereby limit the exchange-rate plunge. And they were implicitly told to accept the resulting recessions—recessions that have,

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admittedly to everyone's surprise, turned out to be the world's worst since the 1930s. In effect, countries were told to forget about macroeconomic policy; instead of trying to prevent or even alleviate the looming slumps in their economies, they were told to follow policies that would actually deepen those slumps.

So where was recovery supposed to come from? Well, reform—closing the bad banks, getting rid of the cronies—was supposed to bring about a restoration of confidence. Do the right thing, countries were told, and international capital will eventually come flooding back.

It is still possible that this was the right policy—that the alternatives would have been even worse. But, right or wrong, Washington's response to the Asian crisis represented a break with, even a betrayal of, a sort of deal that capitalism and its economists made with the public two generations ago.

Call this deal the "Keynesian compact." Its origins lie in the 1930s, when it was natural for even moderate observers to conclude that free markets had failed and that only a highly regulated economy, perhaps even a centrally planned system, could avoid devastating economic slumps. What restored faith in free markets was not just the recovery from the Depression but the assurance that macroeconomic intervention—cutting interest rates or increasing budget deficits to fight recessions—could keep a free-market economy more or less stable at more or less full employment. And, in the United States, that compact has been honored. Oh, there are recessions now and then. However, when they occur, everyone expects the Fed to do what it did in 1975, 1982, and 1991: cut interest rates to perk up the economy.

But, when it comes to "emerging market" economies, suddenly the deal is off. Look at what is happening right now in Brazil—a country which has carried out substantial economic reforms, moving toward much freer markets, but whose unemployment rate has been steadily rising for the past few years. Inflation in Brazil is low; by rights, one might expect the country to be able to cut interest rates and get some job creation under way. Instead, Brazil is being urged to avoid a devaluation of its currency, the real, at all costs. And to keep the real stable, it is told, it must raise interest rates to punitive levels and slash the budget deficit. In other words, far from fighting the slowdown in its economy, Brazil—like Thailand and South Korea—is being instructed to take steps that will clearly ensure a nasty, perhaps disastrous, recession.

Again, maybe this is the right advice. But why did the high-powered economists near the top of the IMF and the Treasury, as soon as they encountered a crisis, throw away the textbooks—indeed, do almost the opposite of what the textbooks would have suggested?

Of course, Thailand is not the United States. Imports are a much larger share of consumption, so that too large a currency depreciation could produce a surge in inflation—perhaps even a runaway wage-price spiral. Also, many corporations and banks in Asia have large dollar debts; a sharp drop in their currencies, which would make those debts suddenly far larger in baht or won or rupiah, might push those borrowers into insolvency. So even economists who strongly believe in benign neglect when it comes to the dollar become more cautious when it comes to the currencies of small developing countries.

But there is a deeper reason why the policies Washington urges on developing countries are so different from those it follows at home: fear of speculators.

Imagine an economy that isn't perfect. (What economy is?) Maybe the government is running a budget deficit that, while not really threatening its solvency, is coming down more slowly than it should, or maybe banks with political connections have made too many loans to questionable borrowers. But, as far as anyone can tell by going over the numbers, there are no problems that cannot be dealt with given goodwill and a few years of stability.

Then, for some reason—perhaps an economic crisis on the other side of the world—investors become jittery and start pulling their money out *en masse*. Suddenly the country is in trouble, its stock market plunging, its interest rates soaring. You might think that savvy investors would see this as an opportunity to buy. After all, if the fundamentals haven't changed, doesn't this mean that assets are now undervalued? Not necessarily. The crash in asset values may cause previously sound banks to collapse; an economic slump plus high interest rates may cause sound companies to go bankrupt; and, at worst, economic distress may cause political instability. Maybe buying when everyone else is rushing for the exits isn't such a good idea after all; maybe it's better to run for the exit yourself.

Thus it is possible in principle that a loss of confidence in a country can produce an economic crisis that justifies that loss of confidence—that countries may be vulnerable to what economists call "self-fulfilling speculative attacks." And, while many economists, myself included, used to be skeptical about the importance of such self-fulfilling crises, the experience of the '90s in Latin America and Asia has settled those doubts, at least as a practical matter.

True, many of the investments made in Asia in recent years now look extremely foolish, and it seems only natural to conclude that they were the product of a deeply corrupt "crony" system—and that the massive loss of investor confidence in Asia was therefore wholly justified on that basis. But how sound would our own financial institutions look if we experienced a comparable loss of investor confidence? Scaling up Thailand's experience to the size of the U.S. economy, it would be as if the roughly $200-billion-per-year net inflow of foreign investment that currently helps stabilize our financial markets were next year to become an outflow, not of $200 billion, but of a *trillion* dollars. How many loans that looked reasonable at the time would suddenly become "nonperforming"? How many seemingly sound banks would be defunct? In short, whatever the sins of

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the Asian economies, it's important to understand that most of what is now wrong with them is the consequence, not the cause, of their crisis.

Big, rich countries like the United States are generally invulnerable to such a self-ratifying loss of market confidence and can still operate on the assumption that the financial markets will more or less appropriately reward good policies. But smaller countries, with a shorter record of economic success, are always at risk—and avoiding such collapses of confidence becomes a central concern of economic policy.

The peculiar thing is that, because speculative attacks can be self-justifying, following an economic policy that makes sense in terms of the fundamentals is not enough to assure market confidence. In fact, the need to win that confidence can actually prevent a country from following otherwise sensible policies and force it to follow policies that would normally seem perverse.

Consider again the plight of Brazil. Many economists believe Brazil's currency is overvalued—that is, if one could ignore the question of market confidence, the country would benefit from a devaluation that would make its exports more competitive on world markets. Examples of successful devaluation abound: the drop in the value of Britain's pound in 1992, while a humiliation for the government, led to a rapid economic recovery that was the envy of continental Europe. But Brazil's leaders (and Washington officials) fear, with good reason, that investors hold developing countries to a different standard: that any comparable move in Brazil would be the signal for a massive run on the currency and would be an economic catastrophe. It's not that devaluation is a terrible thing per se, but investors believe that it would be, and, in a world of self-fulfilling crises, believing makes it so.

The same logic applies to Brazil's interest rate and budget policy. Raising interest rates to defend the currency may be a destructive policy from a strict economic viewpoint; so is reducing spending and raising taxes in the face of a recession. But investors believe that, if Brazil does not do these things, there will be a terrible crisis, and they are surely right, because they themselves will generate that crisis.

Now consider the situation from the point of view of those smart economists who are making policy in Washington. They find themselves dealing with economies whose hold on investor confidence is fragile; almost by definition a country that has come to the United States and/or the IMF for help is one that has already experienced a devastating run on its currency and is at risk of another. The overriding objective of policy must therefore be to mollify market sentiment. But, because crises can be self-fulfilling, sound economic policy is not sufficient to gain market confidence; one must cater to the perceptions, the prejudices, and the whims of the market. Or, rather, one must cater to what one hopes will be the perceptions of the market.

In short, international economic policy ends up having very little to do with economics. It becomes an exercise in amateur psychology, in which the IMF—whose top economist, Stanley Fischer, boasts credentials just as impressive as those of Summers and his crew—and the Treasury Department try to convince countries to do things they hope will be perceived by the market as favorable. No wonder the economics textbooks went right out the window as soon as the crisis hit.

Unfortunately, the textbook issues do not go away. Suppose that Washington is right, that a country threatened with an investor panic must raise interest rates, cut spending, and defend its currency to avoid devastating crisis. It still remains true that tight monetary and fiscal policies, together with an overvalued currency, produce recessions. What remedy does Washington offer? None. The perceived need to play the confidence game supersedes the normal concerns of economic policy. It sounds pretty crazy, and it is.

During the past four years, seven countries—Mexico, Argentina, Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Hong Kong—have experienced severe economic recessions, worse than anything the United States has seen since the '30s, essentially because playing the confidence game forced them into macroeconomic policies that exacerbated slumps instead of relieving them. It now looks extremely likely that Brazil will be forced down the same route and that much of the rest of Latin America will follow. This is a truly dismal, even tragic, record. Isn't there a better way?

Well, as long as countries are wide open to massive movements of hot money—to huge inflows when the markets like them, then to equally large outflows when confidence is shaken for some reason—the answer is no. As long as capital flows freely, nations will be vulnerable to self-fulfilling speculative attacks, and policymakers will be forced to play the confidence game. And so we come to the question of whether capital should really be allowed to flow so freely.

Of course, it is not easy to limit the international movement of capital—at least not without threatening to strangle international trade as well. Discuss the issue with the experts in Washington, and they will raise many pointed technical objections. They will also remind you that, in 1995, the IMF and the Treasury Department played the confidence game on behalf of Mexico and Argentina and won it.

But they do not seem to be winning this time. And even if, miraculously, Asia recovers and Latin America avoids disaster, and even if another crisis does not materialize a couple of years later, the Keynesian compact will still remain broken: developing countries will consistently find that, when a recession strikes, financial markets force them to act in a way that makes that recession even worse.

Maybe such a system can survive, but I doubt it. If allowing free capital movement means that economic policy must play by the rules of the confidence game, sooner or later the world is going to decide that it is a game not worth playing. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

The Odd Couple

Bill Clinton influences the film world. The missile attacks that he recently ordered have revived interest in *Wag the Dog*. His personal behavior has extended permissiveness in public discussion; so it has, in some degree, affected the atmosphere in which **Lolita** (Samuel Goldwyn) arrives. Candor passed a milestone in this country with a comment by a man interviewed on a news program last month: "I never thought I'd have to explain oral sex to my eleven-year-old daughter." And this is only one of the fractures of reticence that have lately been crackling all around us.

Clinton is not into pedophilia like Nabokov's Humbert Humbert. Still, his sexual activities and the publicity about them have made a difference, I'd guess, in the possible shock quotient of this film. No one in his right mind, or even a fragment of it, would make light of pedophilia; but a work of art on that subject cannot now be as completely—or merely—shocking today as it once was. "Once" means a year ago.

The film coils and uncoils like a snake in the sun, sinuous, alluring. In essence, even though essence is not really enough, it is much closer to the novel than the 1962 version, nominally adapted by Nabokov himself. He later said that Stanley Kubrick's film was "first-rate, but it is not what I wrote." Stephen Schiff made the present adaptation, which is published by Applause. (He notes that he retained a few lines from an earlier, discarded version that Harold Pinter wrote for this production.) Schiff calls *Lolita* "the greatest American novel of the postwar era." Even while gurgling some dissent about "American" and the implied slaps at Bellow and Pynchon, we can admit that Schiff has honored his high opinion with a screenplay that, in sum, does about as well with the novel as a screenplay could.

The director, Adrian Lyne, who has specialized in suave renditions of such steamy material as *Fatal Attraction* and *Indecent Proposal*, keeps this new film gliding. He repeats visual effects—too often he frames shots with an irrelevant object large in the foreground, just to surprise us—but he has a gleeful sense of the physical. In the flashback sequence of Humbert Humbert at 13, with a girl of 12, we can almost scent the warmth. Later, with Lolita herself, Lyne suffuses us with the feel of her clothes, the silk of her skin. In the novel Humbert calls her "my hot downy darling," and so Lyne renders her. A few of Lyne's touches are lumpy, like the symbolic shot of flies caught on flypaper, but, during the cross-country trek of Humbert and Lolita, Lyne dabs in enough earnest/ludicrous American topography (a motel that consists of wigwams) to underscore how far afield this European intellectual has been led by his glands.

Humbert is now Jeremy Irons. Not long ago I saw the Kubrick film again and was again convinced that, thin though the screenplay is, James Mason is the ideal Humbert. He gives us a doomed man, conscious of it, accepting it. Mason once predicted that *Lolita* would be filmed again; and here is Irons in the role, giving it his customary vestments of intelligence and sensitive reticence, but at his deepest he is no more than melancholy. Mason suggested a tragic fall.

Dominique Swain seems both younger and older than the first Lolita, Sue Lyon. Literally Swain is younger than Lyon was; but she deals more cannily than Lyon with the power bestowed on her by the development of her body. Swain combines a child's delight at a new toy, sexual attraction, with a woman's knowing use of it. She blends her liking for comic books and jawbreakers with her precocity in bed. The film is careful never to display her breasts, but her body is still the real site of the drama.

As Lolita's mother, Melanie Griffith at last finds a role that her squeaky voice fits suitably. She lacks the pressing yet pitiful vulgarity that Shelley Winters gave the woman, but she is pathetic enough. Once again, Quilty is a problem. The earlier version had a bit too much of Peter Sellers, as chameleon star; this new Quilty has a converse problem. As the demonic nemesis, Frank Langella has too little flavor, and he is tenuously attached to the story. In character terms it's the chief weakness in the adaptation: the role is treated almost as if the audience has read the novel and will know who and why Quilty is.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

First Love, Last Rites. *A first feature that dares simply to exult in the atmosphere of a youthful affair. Heady evocations. (Reviewed 9/7/98)* **A Merry War.** *George Orwell's* Keep the Aspidistra Flying *deftly rendered, a comedy about an aborted 1930s revolt against philistinism with a scintillating cast. (9/7/98)* **Regeneration.** *From Pat Barker's novel about Siegfried Sassoon's stay in a "shell-shock" hospital during World War I. Acutely acted, intelligently written. (9/14&21/98)* **Saving Private Ryan.** *Only a master—Steven Spielberg—could have made the opening D-Day sequence. Any first-line professional could have made the good war movie that follows. (8/17&24/98)*—**SK**

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But Quilty is not the basic trouble—and unfortunately there *is* one. Though this film is fuller than Kubrick's, it too fails the novel. Probably any film must fail, because *Lolita* cannot truly exist outside the novel. Nabokov gives us the chronicle of Humbert's perversion in coruscating prose; and that prose is where the story lives, as porpoises live in the sea.

Nabokov said of his upbringing: "I was a perfectly normal trilingual child," but because of circumstances, "I had to abandon my untrammeled, rich and infinitely docile Russian tongue for a second-rate brand of English." Even if this is only a coy way of drawing attention to his latter-day mastery, it still is mastery. Humbert Humbert's saga is spun in gorgeous language that is outside the domain of film.

Of course it's common to sigh about a picture made from a superior novel that, however good, it cannot compensate for the loss of the medium in which the work was conceived. But with *Lolita* this is much more true, not only because of the quality of the prose but because that prose is used to recount a story of deviance. True, as Alfred Appel, Jr. points out in *The Annotated Lolita*, Humbert eventually comes to a "declaration of genuine love and, finally, to a realization of the loss suffered not by him but by Lolita"; but these passages seem last-minute attempts to balance the book—in which Humbert has called himself a pervert, a victim of pederosis. Additionally, Nabokov uses a foreword by a fictitious Ph.D. to weigh in on the "respectable" side, and he uses *mors ex machina* to deliver both his principals from the long-range results of their behavior.

Still, Nabokov wrote a flaming rhapsody about the love affair of a mature man and a twelve-year-old girl. (By the way, the screenplay never uses the word that the book made famous: nymphet.) He tempered the story slightly with small apologetics, but for the most part the book exults in ecstasy, like the work of Sade or Huysmans or Choderlos de Laclos. *Lolita*, through its very beauty, touches taboo depths in us just as those other authors do; and it seems to me both ridiculous and offensive to a major artist to say that this book is anything other than a soaring canticle of socially unacceptable erotica. The Clinton era makes the action of the novel, adapted to the screen, less egregious, but the action as such is only a synopsis of the work. Shorn of Nabokov's language, as it must be, any film of *Lolita*, even one as adequately made as Lyne's, must seem somewhat gaunt. •

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Robert Brustein on Theater

Sex, Art, and the Supreme Court

During the past year, the Supreme Court made at least two bad decisions having to do with relations between private behavior and public morality. First, the Court ruled that Paula Jones's civil case could proceed before Clinton left office, on the reasoning that it would not interfere with his conduct of the Presidency—a judicial blunder swiftly exposed by the events of the last few months. History will take a bit longer to demonstrate the folly of the Court's eight-to-one decision upholding the decency test in awarding arts grants through the National Endowment for the Arts.

That particular Jesse Helms-sponsored clause, you may remember, commanded the NEA to take into account what it called "general standards of decency and respect for the diverse beliefs and values of the American public" when disbursing money to artists and arts groups. Some concurring justices, believing the 1990 law contained only "advisory language," excused their decision by saying that the clause was essentially "toothless" anyway. Sandra Day O'Connor, for example, declared that the statute would violate the First Amendment if it actually imposed "a penalty on disfavored viewpoints." In other words, you can always appeal to the legal system if you feel your right to speech has been infringed. But if this is so, then why not get rid of the damned thing altogether instead of having to resort to litigation every time the statute is imposed?

Other justices, I believe, read the future more accurately. Disputing O'Connor's sanguine interpretation, Antonin Scalia said that he would consider even an outright ban on federal financing of indecent art to be constitutional. Clarence Thomas agreed. Only Justice David H. Souter recognized that such a statute, however interpreted or administered, was a form of content restriction, hence a clear instance of viewpoint discrimination, and should have been struck down.

None of the justices brought up the really vexing question, which is how it ever came to be assumed that the public at large has the right to decide on morality in the arts. The whole notion of "general standards of decency and respect," otherwise known as "community standards," has never been intelligently debated in this country, though this dubious concept has been eloquently denounced by many thinkers, among them Mill, Nietzsche, Ibsen, Shaw, Santayana, Unamuno, and Mencken. It was "community standards" that for years banned works by D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, and, most notably, James Joyce, whose *Ulysses* took more than ten years to get published in the United States. In a landmark decision in 1933, John M. Woolsey, a United States District Judge, ruled that while "somewhat emetic, nowhere does [*Ulysses*] tend to be an aphrodisiac." He concluded that the book was therefore not obscene in the legal definition of the word, namely as "tending to stir the sex impulses or lead to sexually impure and lustful thoughts."

So, Americans finally got the chance to ingest the emetic *Ulysses* as a literary supplement to milk of magnesia. But such a definition would have technically prevented us from openly buying erotic books by such authors as Rabelais, Aretino, or Boccaccio, among others more erotic than cathartic. In his classic essay "Pornography and Obscenity," Lawrence ridiculed a British home secretary who harbored a similar definition of obscenity. Outraged over some improper literature, that official had bellowed: "And these two young people, who had been perfectly pure up till that time, after reading this book went out and had sexual intercourse together!!!"—to which Lawrence jubilantly retorted: "One up to them!" Lawrence was hardly a proselytizer for promiscuity. He probably conformed to a stricter moral code than any of his detractors (holding the curious opinion, for example, that masturbation was "the most dangerous sexual vice that society can be afflicted with"). But Lawrence also knew that behind the rabid fulminations of the Comstocks and the Grundys and the Bowdlers lurked a true obscenity, and perhaps the *raison d'être* of pornography, namely "the grey disease of sex hatred," the desire to keep sex "a dirty little secret." (To him, the emancipated bohemians were not a whole lot better since, in killing off the dirty little secret through public promiscuity and group sex, they also managed to kill off whatever was dark and private in the erotic life.)

Lawrence was even more passionate on the subject of "community standards." First of all, how does a community decide an issue of "obscenity" when no one knows what the term means? Supposedly derived from the Latin *obscena*, meaning that which might not be represented on the stage, it is a word originally driven by the traditional Puritan hostility toward the theater as a form. Since not all of us are Puritans, how then can we arrive at a single community standard? "What is obscene to Tom is not obscene to Lucy or Joe," Lawrence wrote, "and really, the meaning of a word has to wait for majorities to decide it." Majorities, majorities. Only what Yeats called "the mad intellect of democracy" could ever have devised the caprice that the mass of people corner wisdom in this matter. "We have to leave everything to the majority," Lawrence stormed, "everything to the majority, everything to the mob, the mob, the mob.... If the lower ten million doesn't know better than the upper ten men, then there's something wrong with mathematics. Take a vote on it. Show hands, and prove my count. Vox populi, vox Dei."

The talented ten to whom Lawrence alluded have been almost universally scornful of this populist voice of God. Shakespeare had little respect for "the many-headed multitude." Mill castigated "the tyranny of the majority." Ibsen was certain "the majority is always wrong." Shaw joked that "forty million Frenchmen can't be right." Mencken inveighed against "boobocracy." In response to which contemporary populists and majoritarians everywhere would undoubtedly unleash their favorite epithet: "elitists."

But like most of the other thinkers, Lawrence had the capacity to distinguish between what he called the "mob-self," which mindlessly acquiesces in conventional opinions, and the "individual-self,"which is capable of original, subtle, and imaginative thought. People have always longed for an informed electorate. The concept of an enlightened majority has been an elusive ideal ever since the invention of democracy. The most obvious way to achieve this has been through widespread dissemination of works of intellect and the arts. But instead of absorbing the best that has been thought and created in any age, the mass of people in modern industrial societies is invariably bombarded with the most debased forms of opinion and entertainment—being manipulated, diddled, and scammed by those who will use any available means of communication to expand their own powers.

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It was Lawrence who observed that "the public, which is feeble-minded like an idiot, will never be able to preserve its individual reactions from the tricks of the exploiter." Indeed, the ideal of an enlightened majority grows more and more distant as our advanced technology gets more and more skillful at influencing minds. Today, the religious right, among other influential groups, is using the media to blitz us with all manner of anxieties, hypocrisies, mind gropes, fears, and lies. Americans no longer turn for wisdom to Emerson or Dewey, but to Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, if not to Rush Limbaugh, Geraldo, and Imus.

The question that remains, however, is federal funding for the arts, and why the public should be required to pay for something that offends the religious or moral sensibilities of some of its members. It is a difficult question to argue without also explaining why the public should pay for something that doesn't interest the great majority—classical music, for example, or modern dance. As John Kenneth Galbraith never tires of reminding us, even in a capitalist society the government is responsible for a number of services not determined by the market—the police department, the fire department, public housing, health, sanitation, education, the courts, government itself. Even a galloping market economy has the capacity to recognize that certain crucial needs are not adequately supplied through competition, and chief among these are the serious arts. Do we need to be told again that the greatest books of any time rarely make the best-seller lists, that the finest works of music are hardly to be found on the pop charts, that the best plays are seldom the biggest box-office bonanzas? Let the market drive the popular arts—Hollywood, Broadway, Madison Avenue, and Motown. The serious arts cannot survive without patronage and support.

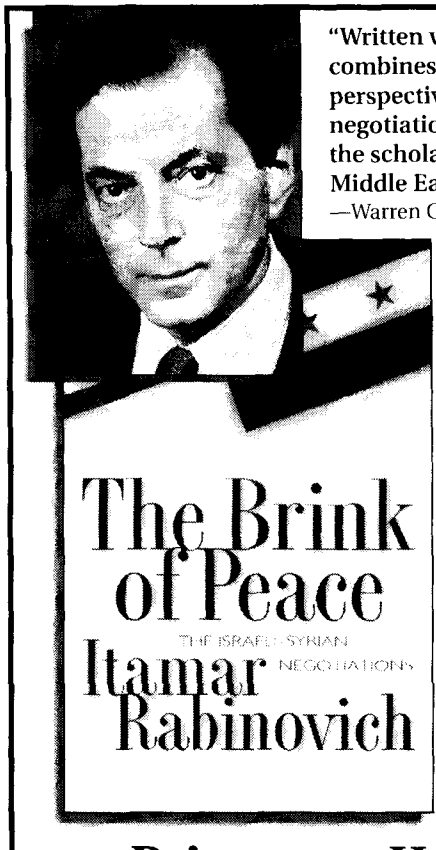
But what right has government to assess my precious tax dollars if I am not a patron of the opera or a visitor to museums? Put aside the fact that with the present appropriation to the NEA (less than $100 million annually, much of it going to State Arts Councils), I am not even contributing tax dollars, or even a tax dollar, or even half a dollar to the arts, but a figure closer to thirty cents, why should I be required to contribute a penny if there's no immediate benefit?

I don't believe that this is a serious question. If it were, then why wasn't I consulted when being assessed infinitely larger amounts for such inestimable boons to humankind as the Vietnam War, the B-1 bomber, or the Strategic Defense Initiative? It is only when contemplating subsidies to the arts and the humanities that the public is supposed to have a deciding voice. And even then that voice is not respected or heeded: recent polls assure us that most Americans still favor larger Federal subsidies for the arts.

The nub of the matter remains obscenity and impiety. Should I be obliged to contribute even thirty cents to look at photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe with a whip handle up his butt or be affronted by Andres Serrano's urine-dipped crucifix or watch Karen Finley smear her naked body with chocolate syrup? The answer is: I can always turn my face away. One of the blessings of a democracy is freedom of choice. I have the freedom to choose among the countless other works of art available to me, or not to look at anything. The Finley show, the Mapplethorpe photographs and Serrano photographs are only three among thousands of undisputed artworks that have been partially supported by federal subsidy, and no one is requiring me to patronize them.

If I did, however, I might discover that Finley's infamous chocolate act was less designed for prurient display than for making some statement about the female body, just as Andres Serrano's notorious photograph was trying to tell us something about the commercial exploitation of religious objects. I confess I don't see much value in Mapplethorpe's *X* portfolio, but nothing compels me to look at it. The problem is sectarian sensitivities. In an atmosphere of delicate, easily wounded feelings—an atmosphere to which the politically correct left has certainly contributed a fair share of moans and groans—such expressions were bound to outrage certain factions. Still, it is useful to remember that, in addition to guaranteeing the rights of the majority, our form of government is also dedicated to guaranteeing the rights of dissenting opinion so long as it doesn't incite violence. It is a fact of history that the vanguard has rarely been able to collect a majority for its ideas or creations until years after the advances have been absorbed by the establishment.

It is the obligation of a democratic society, however, to protect the magical idea from those who would politicize it into a program or a slogan. And that means, of course, giving support to legitimate visionary artists, no matter how offensive their works may seem to certain organized coalitions. It may not be the primary purpose of the arts to provoke the populace, but this function is



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often the consequence of any artistic expression attempting to break new ground. American civilization, like all societies, exists not only in the present but in the future as well. We remember Athens less for the Peloponnesian Wars than for Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Sappho, Plato, and Aristotle. We value the Elizabethans not so much for overcoming the Spanish Armada as for producing the works of Spenser, Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson. We admire Victorian England not for colonizing half the globe, but for bringing forth the novels of Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot. Do Americans wish to be remembered primarily for gangsta rap, *Seinfeld*, *Rent*, and *Titanic*? All those attempting to help mold the American future through creative expression, all those who care about how our present-day society will be perceived by posterity, can only be dismayed and appalled by this Supreme Court decision. •

What does Mohammed Khatami think?

Mohammed and Mill

By Fred Halliday

If the president of Iran addresses the General Assembly of the United Nations this month, as planned, it will be the first time any leader of the Islamic Republic has addressed that body, or indeed set foot in a Western country, for almost a decade. Mohammed Khatami, a Shi'ite cleric, was elected with a 70 percent majority in May 1997, and he took office in August last year. In the ensuing twelve months he has tried to redirect Iran's politics, within the country and in its relations with the outside world. At home he has set a new tone, calling for respect for the law, a democratization of politics, and an active role for women in society. In regard to the West, not least the United States, he has called for dialogue, for a lessening of the hostility that has built up over the decades.

Nobody can be sure that Khatami will prevail. Powerful conservative forces, in the clergy and in the security forces, are mobilizing against his reforms. Iran's oil revenues have fallen by almost 40 percent this year, and the consequent economic problems may well be blamed on the president. And the issues that divide Iran from its Arab and Caspian neighbors, and from the West, will not be resolved by kind and liberal words alone. Still, the advent of Khatami, coupled with widespread intellectual and cultural ferment in Iran, is incontrovertible evidence that something dramatic is taking place in Iranian politics, with implications for the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Islamic world as a whole. This is a new man with a new voice.

It is important to study the man and the voice. Khatami himself comes from the heart of the religious establishment in Iran. Born in 1943 in the town of Ardakan, near the city of Yazd in central Iran, his father Ayatollah Ruhollah Khatami was an associate of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who was appointed Khomeini's representative in Yazd after the revolution. Married with three children, Khatami himself is also related by marriage to Khomeini. He studied politics, education, and law. In 1978, just before the Iranian revolution, he was appointed head of the Islamic Institute in Hamburg, Germany. After the revolution, he served from 1982 to 1992 as Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, a position from which he tried to mitigate the cultural severity of the regime, particularly in the cinema, before becoming a special adviser to then-President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Khatami's emergence in the Presidential elections of 1997 was a great surprise. It was widely assumed that Natiq Nuri, the candidate of the conservatives, would succeed Rafsanjani. But two things happened to confound this expectation: first, the outgoing president ensured that, once candidates were nominated, a relatively free election would take place; and second, the Iranian people voted by an overwhelming majority for change.

Khatami presents himself as a man of learning. He says that the most important room in his house is the library. His ideas can be gleaned from his speeches as candidate and as president, and from two books: *Bim-i Mouj*, or *Fear of the Storm*, a collection of five essays that appeared in 1993; and *As Donya-yi Shahr ta Shahr-i Donya*, or *From the City-World to the World-City*, which appeared in 1994, a study of Western political thought from Plato to contemporary liberalism. The latter book is an argument for democracy and freedom, and for open dialogue between civilizations.

Written in broad philosophical terms, with judicious hints about the practical implications of the ideas discussed, these books represent something which for Iran, and for contemporary Islamic thinking, is a break with the tenor of much recent militant and fundamentalist work. In place of an outright rejection of the non-Muslim world and of the West, there is a call for a knowledge of the other and for mutual enrichment. There is criticism of the West, but without recourse to nativist demagogy. (I have consulted Khatami's writings in the original, but the translations that follow are based on the renderings in *Hope and Challenge: The Iranian President Speaks*, published by the Institute of Global Cultural Studies at SUNY Binghamton and edited by Parviz Morewedge and Kent Jackson, and on the partial translation and summary of Khatami's two volumes by Farhang Jahanpur of the BBC Monitoring Services. I tend to use Jahanpur.) Consider this passage:

> Now that we have carried out a revolution, according to which we wish to establish an Islamic system, we will be able to regard our revolution as a source of a new civilization only if we have the capacity and capability of borrowing the positive aspects of the Western civilization and if we have the necessary intelligence to identify its harmful aspects so that we can put them to one side.... If we are going to borrow the positive experiences and benefits of Western civilization and reject its negative aspects, we have no option but to gain a thorough and correct understanding of the West, to make a fair and balanced judgment concerning it, adopt its strengths and recognize and reject its weaknesses by returning to the intellectual resources and value systems of our revolution which were based on Islam. It is quite clear that such an encounter is quite different from a political encounter. Those who are not able to distinguish between these two encounters are acting against the interests of the Islamic revolution and the nation, even though they may not have any ill intentions. In this arena, not harsh words and violence, but awareness, logic, and fair-mindedness are effective.

In place of claims that all the solutions to the world's problems are to be found in the central texts of Islam, there is an openness to change, and to some secular ideas. Indeed, in a speech on

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the anniversary of his election in May, Khatami talked of the conflict between faith and liberty, and he insisted that the lesson of history was that in any conflict between faith and liberty, liberty would win. Two attempts had been made to impose faith coercively: the Christian Inquisition in the sixteenth century, and communism in the twentieth, and both had failed; and so, too, would any Islamic attempt to do so now.

By going beyond the dogma of fundamentalism, Khatami reaches back to an earlier tradition in Islamic thought, one that prevailed from the late nineteenth century through the first decades of this century, a tradition more liberal and modernist in its interpretation of the Islamic tradition and in its attitude to the west. Such thinkers as Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Ali Abd al-Razzaq, Qasim Amin, and Muhammad Iqbal represented this trend. They wanted to remain Muslims, in religion and culture, but they also wanted to learn from the West.

It has been easy, in recent years, to present fundamentalism as the sole voice of the Muslim world; but it is not, and it never was. What the fundamentalism of the past two decades and more has tried to drown out within the Islamic world is not just non-Islamic and Western thinking, but also alternative religious and cultural traditions within the Islamic world. This goes for the modernism of the earlier decades, but also for the lyrical and critical literature of earlier centuries that is central to Iranian culture. Khatami's work represents a rejection of this dogma. The very title of his collection of essays *Fear of the Storm* is from the medieval Persian hedonistic poet Hafez:

> A darksome night, the fear of storm and such a frightful whirlpool: how can those who are sitting in the comfort of the shore know our plight?

Khatami's range of intellectual interests, from Plato and Aristotle to Locke and Rousseau, denies any theological exclusion. He does not seek, as many Islamic writers do, to claim the ideas of Western thought for Islam, or to effect artificial reconciliations. He says clearly that there is learning to be done, and from different traditions.

> We should bear in mind that Western civilization is based on the concept of "freedom"; namely, the most sacred concept and the most desired goal of all people in all the ages. In its journey from the Middle Ages to the modern age the West has shattered many intellectual, political, and social chains and fetters which had ensnared mankind, and has liberated humanity from many wrong rules, regulations, and customs. It has abolished the sanctity of many dark concepts which had been imposed upon the people in the name of religion. It crushed the pomp and grandeur of dictatorships and ended the complete submission to the power of absolute rulers. All these were positive steps which were in keeping with the soul of creation. However, the West's understanding of freedom and of man was an incorrect, limited, and one-dimensional understanding. Consequently, humanity has paid and is still paying a heavy price for this limited outlook.

Khatami rebukes those who rely on the vehement rejection of the West, on a ranting search for enemies, counter-revolutionaries, and conspiracies.

In the first three of the five essays in *Fear of the Storm*, Khatami discusses different thinkers in contemporary Islam who have tried to shape their teachings to meet the social and political challenges of the modern world: Ruhollah Khomeini, the leader of the Iranian revolution until his death in 1989; Morteza Motahhari, a theologian assassinated by an extremist group just after the revolution; and Mohammed Baqr Sadr, the Iraqi leader who was executed by Saddam in 1980. The fourth essay, entitled "Hopes and Fears," addresses the question of how Muslims should relate to the West. The fifth essay, "Our Revolution and the Future of Islam," provides a broad account of civilizations.

Khatami argues that there are, broadly speaking, three kinds of Islam: *irtijai*, or reactionary; *iltiqati*, or eclectic; and *nab*, or pure. The reactionaries argue against the participation of women in politics, and deny that anyone other than the clergy can play a political or social role; and they impose a narrow-minded cultural policy, going so far as to try to ban music and sport from television. Eclectic Islam refers to those who are not really Muslims at all but conceal their goals under Islamic garb. He would appear to mean by this term groups such as the Mojahidin-I Khalq, the radical Islamic group who have been fighting a guerrilla war against the regime in Tehran since 1981.

> This kind of eclectic Islam is one of the most dangerous channels for the infiltration of Western heresies among Muslims. Un-Islamic and anti-Islamic political or intellectual trends have never had a popular basis in Islamic societies and have never posed a major threat. However, those who have possessed the same anti-Islamic concepts but have appeared in the guise of Islam, have been able to present their

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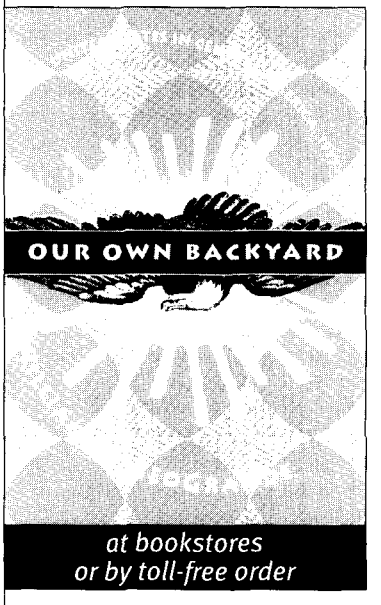

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borrowed and distorted views, which they have acquired in a superficial way from the West to the society and to gain access to certain sections of society.

And then there is "pure" Islam. Sources within the Islamic tradition are deployed by Khatami to give substance to this true faith. One of those sources is the thinking of the tenth century thinker al-Farabi. Born in Central Asia, al-Farabi studied in Syria and Egypt, and taught in Aleppo. He was one of the most important links between non-Muslim and Muslim thinking, reaching back to Plato and Aristotle, and forward to Aquinas and Maimonides. His concept of *al-madinah al-fadhila*, or the virtuous city, sought to integrate the thought of Plato and Aristotle within the framework of Islamic political thinking. In accordance with the accepted cosmology of his day, al-Farabi interpreted the tripartite classification of the intellect—the Active Intellect, the Potential Intellect, and the Acquired Intellect—to teach that human beings, although subject to divine will and the authority of holy texts, could develop their own ideas, and produce independent interpretations and judgments on the issues of the day.

In modern times, this classical legacy has been put to particular use by thinkers within Shi'ite Islam, not only in Iran but also in other areas of innovative Shi'ite thinking, notably in Iraq and in Lebanon. Khatami's respect for the Iraqi cleric Baqr Sadr is matched by that for the Lebanese cleric Musaq Sadr, to whom he is also related, and who disappeared in 1978, apparently abducted by Libyan agents. The central concept here, the stimulus of this current of pragmatism, is the idea of *ijtihad*, or independent judgment in the interpretation of tradition.

For Sunnis, the "door of *ijtihad*" has in large measure been closed. For the Shi'ites of the Usuli school, originating in the early nineteenth century, the opposite is the case. The founder of the Usulis, Shaikh Murtaza Ansari, who died in Iran in 1864, is another of Khatami's inspirations. The Usulis stress independent judgment and the authority of the *mujtahid*, or independent interpreter. Indeed, so strongly has this developed over the past two centuries that a new religious hierarchy has developed, with the rank of *ayatollah*, a creation of the early twentieth century, at the top. It was the hierarchy that emerged from Usuli thinking which, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, provided a standpoint for resistance to British and Russian encroachment on Iran, and later to the autocracy of the Shah.

The origins of modern Iranian politics lie in this period: the Tobacco Boycott of 1891-92 and the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-11. They provided a nationalist point of reference for all later Iranian political leaders, religious and secular. This reference, therefore, has both a religious meaning and a nationalist meaning. Khomeini exercised *ijtihad* in arguing that, despite the disappearance of the Prophet's successor, a true Islamic government is still possible. Khatami seeks to exercise *ijtihad* in advocating his new, more open approach to modern problems and to non-Muslim ideas.

Yet there is another current in Khatami's thinking that runs across this modernist interpretation. It is based on the concept of *irfan*, which literally means "cognition," but here denotes the standpoint of Shi'ite mysticism. *Irfan* is an informal, non-scholastic approach to Islam that was denounced by many earlier Shi'ite *mujtahids*; but Khomeini was strongly influenced by it, and it informed his other-worldly denunciation of materialism and his lofty attitude, sometimes perceptive, sometimes cruel, to everyday politics. (While on occasion he talked in Third Worldist terms of independent industrialization, he once said that economics was a subject fit for donkeys.)

Khatami is himself a strong rationalist, and so it is noteworthy that he has drawn attention to this strain in Khomeini's thinking. In *Fear of the Storm*, he characterizes Khomeini in three ways: "a *mujahid* [engaged and activist] jurist, a revolutionary mystic, and a statesman immersed in moral values." An Iranian audience would not need to be told what this allusion to *irfan* signifies: a particularly Persian mystical tradition, one that, even more than Shi'ism itself, sets Iran apart from the rest of the Muslim world; but also a coded defense of Khomeini. With his carefully chosen words, Khatami can be read as seeking to shield Khomeini from charges relating to his record in practical politics, especially in regard to cultural matters. It is Khomeini's spirituality, his momentous willingness to interpret the tradition in the light of contemporary concerns, that Khatami wishes to underscore.

This attitude to the Islamic past coexists in Khatami with an open attitude to Western thinking. Time and again in his books and his speeches he stresses the need for dialogue between civilizations. This is a historical analysis, whose aim is to show how Islam and Western thought have always interacted; but it also has a contemporary interpretation, which is to criticize the goal of shutting a country such as Iran off from the outside world.

Regardless of the genuine Islamic attitude, in my view "rejection" is not possible in the context of the present conditions of the world. The means of communicating thoughts and moral values to the minds of other people and other societies are not limited to official channels, so that if we controlled them, then we would have no further problems. In other worlds, even if we did not allow one bad book to be published in our society, or if we prevented every newspaper or magazine from publishing anything contrary to our wishes and tastes, and even if we refused permission for the production of any film which in our view might contain the slightest weakness; in that case, when we banned and prevented all these at an official level, will they not be put at the disposal of the people through any other means?... If we regard the channels for the transfer of concepts, ideas, and ways of behavior from one individual to another or from one society to another to be purely limited to official channels and under the control of governments, this would more resemble a joke than a serious assumption.

With the largest portion of the Iranian population under twenty, and intensely interested in what the outside world has to offer, this is no abstract position: Khatami's opponents sputter about *tahajum-i farhangi*, or "cultural aggression," and they have imposed a formal ban on satellite dishes. What some Iranians term the "silent sexual revolution" now underway in the country is, along with the fascination with satellite television and consumer goods, a measure of the erosion of these barriers.

The opposition to openness is precisely what Khatami sees as "reactionary Islam." But his argument is predominantly a positive one: that Islam has nothing to fear from contact with the outside world. "The cultural strategy of a dynamic, vibrant Islamic society cannot be isolation." And this more open cultural perspective is linked to a broad theory of civilizations, developed in the fourth essay of *Fear of the Storm*. In an argument that will be as unwelcome to Samuel Huntington as to religious chauvinists everywhere—Islamic, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, neo-Confucian—Khatami wisely rejects the idea of discrete, separate, cultural entities: "Unless they are completely unaware of each other's existence, civilizations ordinarily affect and transform one another.... The give-and-take among civilizations is the norm of history."

Civilizations, moreover, are entitled to no permanent domination. Western civilization has dominated the world for the past four hundred years, and in its heyday so did Islam: there is in this compar-

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ison not only the implication that there is a crisis in the West, but also the implication that claims about the return of Islamic dominance have no historical foundation. Perhaps most surprisingly, Khatami ascribes the fate of civilizations not to any divine element, but to two more worldly factors: the nature of the human mind, and the emergence of new needs in human society.

> Of the many factors that spur the emergence, rise, and demise of civilizations, two are fundamental: the dynamism of humankind and the concomitant surfacing of new needs and necessities in human life. Humankind is instinctively active, perpetually driven by a burning curiosity that confronts a never-ending chain of new questions to which it must find answers, or it will not rest or be content... At the same time, humans strive to fulfill their material needs.

There is a crisis, declares Khatami, in the society of revolutionary Iran. Unless Iran is able to find a way of providing an answer to the problems it faces, that is to say, unless it finds a way of reconciling religion with the pressures of the modern world, it will merely succumb to Western domination. And the West is itself in crisis. In the final part of *From the City-World to the World-City*, Khatami writes that "the manifest weakening of its inner strength" is evident in the West's increasing inability to provide answers to new questions and in a growing lack of confidence in the ability of Western civilization to produce a desirable future. He is not precise about what he considers to be the crisis of Western society, but he links it to the inevitable cyclical decline of all civilizations. Moreover, science and the scientific method have lost their unquestioned authority. "Science is no longer a panacea which can provide a point of reference, and cannot provide an absolute answer to the restless human soul."

Khatami develops his view of the West at length in *From the City-World to the World-City*. This is a study of Western political thought, emphasizing above all the growth of ideas of freedom and ideas of rights. After chapters on Aristotle, Plato, and medieval Christian thought, he comments favorably on the emergence of secular reason in the Renaissance, and on John Locke's concept of liberty. Khatami discusses the development and the flexibility of liberalism.

> Liberalism and its intellectual and practical repercussions are not minor issues which we can easily ignore and dismiss. They have their roots deep in the philosophies and motivations of Western man and are the context of the modern way of life. Today the West is the dominant civilization, and without understanding liberalism we cannot understand the depth of thinking of the political form of Western civilization.... Certain concepts such as "freedom," "setting limits to the absolute power of the rulers and bringing it under supervision," "constitutional government" based on the wishes and views of the people under the rule of that government, and finding human, measurable, and practical solutions for implementing the above ideals are all very lofty ideas which have been achieved at a heavy cost. If we do not regard all these as the greatest single achievement of modern civilization, they are definitely among some of its major achievements.

This calm and sympathetic assessment of liberalism is very striking indeed. Liberalism, after all, has been a term of abuse in revolutionary Iran, associated as it has been with pro-Western intellectuals, if not with the CIA. Khatami complains that scholars in Iran have been deprived of adequate and reliable information on the basis of which they could make an informed judgment.

At times Khatami writes of the West as an undifferentiated whole, as if it is a single entity, a single force, from which everything else—from liberalism to capitalism to imperialism—issues. This is one of the standard distortions of so much Third World and nativist writing on "the West." But finally Khatami overcomes this limitation, and in the concluding chapter of *From the City-World* he recognizes that the values he most admires are not the product of some unitary "West," but the result of struggle within the West. He also recognizes that those values have been achieved at high cost to traditional ideas and institutions.

Khatami has less to say in his books and his speeches about what all this means for practical, political life. Still, throughout his writings he reiterates the need for any civilization or philosophical system to respond to the needs of its time. And there is enough in these writings to provide an indication of Khatami's general outlook on politics. He insists on three political values above all. First, he is a proponent of political freedom: he is clear, as are many other leading figures in Iran, on the need to allow political parties to form, and he insists on the need for a free press. Second, he advocates the rule of law, and constitutional government: he notes that the first upheaval of twentieth century Iran was the revolution for a constitution in 1905-11, and that there is in Iran today a constitution which, if properly applied, can form the basis for the consolidation of democracy. Third, he advocates a concept of "civil society," meaning a set of independent social associations acting in public life and, more broadly, the active participation of the people in politics, and the subordination of government to their will.

These general ideas were articulated in more detail in his inauguration speech of August 4, 1997. The duties of the president, he proclaimed, include safeguarding the official religion, serving the people, desisting from autocracy, and protecting the freedom and the dignity of individuals and the rights of the nation. He quoted the words of Imam Ali, the Prophet Mohammed's son-in-law, the fourth Caliph, and the first Imam, or leader, of Shi'ite Islam:

> Do not praise me, so that I can fulfill the rights that are left unrealized and perform

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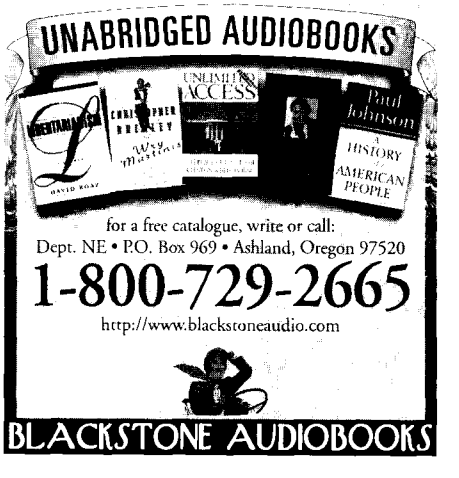

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the obligations that are left undone. Do not address me the way despots are addressed, and do not avoid me as the ill-tempered are treated. Do not approach me with an air of artificiality, and do not think that I find the truth offensive. I do not want you to revere me. He who finds listening to complaints difficult will surely find administration of justice even more so. Therefore, do not hesitate in telling the truth or in advising me on matters of justice. I am neither above fallibility nor am I immune from error in my conduct, unless God safeguards me from the self, over which He commands more control than I.

In his inaugural address, Khatami appealed to the judiciary and the executive to establish a society based on the rule of law, and he called on the judiciary to promote and to consolidate the principle of accountability. There was little in his speech about obedience to religion, but there was much about the rights of the people and the need for them to participate. In international affairs, Khatami emphasized the need for "a proud, prosperous, and independent Iran," and for a dialogue among civilizations.

Khatami's tone, and the substance of his reflections, have struck a responsive chord inside Iran. There is a widespread feeling in that country of over 60 million that the goals of the revolution need reviewing, and that, faced with manifest problems at home and abroad, a diversity of views must emerge. Khatami's intellectual appeal is reinforced by his personal manner: he does not hector or denounce, he chooses instead a calm, rational tone. And his modesty—he uses public transportation and visits schools without official pomp—has impressed many Iranians.

This is not to say that he has convinced all Iranians. There are those in the conservative camp who are determined to sabotage him, by overt and covert obstruction, and who see in Ali Khamene'i a possible counter to Khatami. And there are others, of secular orientation, who remain suspicious of anyone who has issued from the clerical camp, and remains a clergyman. The great issue confronting Khatami, and those who seek to assess his progress, is how far he can prevail over these oppositions.

It is certainly too soon to say; optimism would be as misguided as pessimism. In some respects Khatami resembles Gorbachev, who came to office in March 1985 signaling a clear break, but without the power to implement his intentions. It is worth recalling that it took Gorbachev until July 1987, over two years, to constitute a Central Committee of his choosing.

But the analogy with the former Soviet leader has its limits. Khatami's position is weaker than Gorbachev's, since the Iranian system is one with several centers of power, and is not liable to the kind of authoritarian reform that Gorbachev practiced. And Khatami's position is also stronger than Gorbachev's, in that he already enjoys the mandate of popular election, no major foreign commitments to renegotiate, and a constitution that, with reasonable reform, can provide the basis for the kind of Iran that he wants to see.

We will soon have a clearer reading of Khatami's position: elections for the influential Council of Experts will go ahead in October, local elections in 1999, parliamentary elections in 2000, and presidential elections, in which Khatami could run for a second term, in 2001. Like Gorbachev, he is a reformer who emerged from the existing regime, and like Gorbachev, he appears to harbor illusions about how far the tide of change can be stemmed. But Khatami has a political mandate, and a mass movement supporting him from below; and his country need not disintegrate or transform its constitutional system for his project to be realized.

Within Khatami's own thinking, there are questions that will remain unanswered and contradictions that will remain unresolved until he is put to the political test. He has supported the creation of political parties, but the how and the when of political change, the limits of the reform that he seeks, remain unclear. He supports greater public activity by women, but he has been silent on specific discriminations to which women are subjected, in dress and in law. He is open to Western ideas, but he has been critical of secular intellectuals and of secularism in general. He wishes to make a break with the dogma of the revolutionary past, yet he continues to appeal, in his own rationalist and independent rendering, to the legacy of Khomeini. His attitude to Western political thought is positive, but some may wonder whether the intensity of his admiration for the philosopher-king of Plato is really a liberal admiration.

And yet it is impossible any longer to doubt the reality of Khatami's liberalizing venture, and its significance for Iran, for the Middle East as a whole, and for a Muslim world torn between an indecisive modernism and an assertive fundamentalism. The outside world, Muslim and non-Muslim, is right to be a little mesmerized. •

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Titian's Women by Rona Goffen

(Yale University Press, 342 pp., $60)

When I was an overweight and anxious college freshman, I kept a small reproduction of Titian's *Venus of Urbino* over my desk. While struggling with the desperate unwieldiness of life, I found the picture an inspiration, a solace, a hope, a constant joy. For a start, it was the very apotheosis of a plump girl, intensely erotic and supremely beautiful; and then it was a glorious triumph of painting. Titian's technical mastery, conceptual genius, and sexual understanding had created a sublime subject and a sublime object. It hung above my books and papers representing the perfect synthesis of sex and love, art and thought, facts and magic, desire and science. I wanted to be Venus and I wanted to be her creator.

Venus's young face is sweetly intelligent as she lies naked in her bracelet and her earrings. She buries the fingers of one hand in her shadowy pubic fleece and those of the other in a small bunch of roses, and turns her head gently against the pillow to look sidelong into the viewer's eyes. Her hair is both tidy and careless, both dark and fair; her body expresses both vital sensuality and casual ease; her warm gaze is both electric and untroubled. Her form is harmonious, unmarred by any special erotic emphasis other than her own hand's calm pose. She breathes no whiff of depravity or abandon, of death and corruption under the velvet skin, but she is completely real.

Her empty dress is slung over a maid's shoulder. Her silky puppy is asleep on the bed, her room is in a sumptuous house. Her surroundings say that she is

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rich; her peaceable curves, in tune with the universe, say she has found the love of her life. Her hand tells us that she is thinking of him. Her face tells us that she is looking at him. The picture says that mighty Aphrodite, who rules the world, is yours alone.

Titian was able to achieve this kind of balance again and again. Hardly any other painter managed to make the pagan deities—or the Christian saints, the Virgin and her son—seem so palpably at home in the modern world. Titian had his own personal way of rendering sacredness, Christian or pagan. He managed what seems a naturally random unity, the effect of life itself having brought about, for the sake of this unique revelation, the muted fusion and concord among the pictured elements. Much of this was due to his genius for delicately asymmetrical composition and for subtle facial and bodily expression, with which he could create a blend of the current and the transcendent that seemed to bathe visibly modern persons in the living air of a lost and holy time.

For Christian imagery, Titian's master Bellini had already begun creating some of this effect; but Titian in particular could do it with the sensuous universe of the ancient gods. How could he achieve it? First by being Venetian, and inheriting the distinctive Venetian tradition of painting. From Bellini and even more from his colleague Giorgione, Titian learned the secrets of the atmospheric method, the famous *colorito* that the painters of Venice opposed to the Florentine insistence on *disegno. Disegno* meant the controlled proportions, the clear drawing, and the contained modeling on which a Central Italian image depended for its authority, of which linear perspective was also a binding element.

In the Florentine scheme for painting, where sculpture always seemed the superior model, color was the handmaid of form, casting her warming tints over its cool structures. But Venetian painters made color the master, a mode of formal composition in itself. Its subtly layered arrangements—the *colorito*—alone created the proportions, the shapes and the spaces, the mobile light and shade, the drama and the details. Shifts of tone and tint gave Venetian pictures a breathing, immediate air; Florentine pictures aimed at a lucid beauty made of order and stability.

Classical themes went very well in the Florentine scheme, and learned patrons expected mythological paintings to display the self-conscious clarity, solidity, and linearity that they found in the sculptured remains of Classical art. Patrons in sixteenth-century Venice and neighboring principalities, where actual remnants were rarer, were no less glad to commission visions of Classical antiquity, in the new humanist spirit. For their taste, however, new images reflecting the ancient world would have to seem unself-conscious, naturally sensual and atmospheric—that is, modern Venetian—without being stripped of their antique identity.

For mythological scenes, which he called his *poesie*, Titian surpassed the otherworldly Bellini and Giorgione, using the modern Venetian mode as if he were employing the fresh, instinctive methods of an antique painter rendering the nymphs from life. He would not convey an ancient theme simply by quoting in paint from surviving antiquities, most of them sculpture; all Titian's classical references were very carefully modified, as were his many references to the works of his contemporaries and his predecessors. He also avoided too-glaringly modern usages, whenever he suggested the artifacts and the costumes of his own time as elements in antique scenes. By this means, he could bring the sacred Venus into a modern bedroom like an impossible dream, her divinity tempered by normal circumstance, the room's actualities suddenly harmonized by her presence.

Rona Goffen's book deals only with Titian's secular and mythological women, stretching that a bit to include the conventionally errant and repentant Mary Magdalen, as a companion for Lucretia, the raped and suicidal Roman wife. Titian's other female Christian saints and his various remarkable Virgins are not part of this book, though I wonder why Goffen did not include the vivid *Woman Taken in Adultery* from Titian's Giorgionesque period. Goffen has written two books and many scholarly articles on Venetian painting, and on individual works by Titian and Bellini. Her new book brings some of the views that she has expounded elsewhere to bear on an overarching thesis about Titian's use of women as subjects for painting.

Goffen proposes Titian as a painterly champion of women, a Renaissance feminist expressing his partisanship through his art, the unique exception to a prevailing misogyny expressed through the art of others, as well as in a variety of writings, customs, laws, and everyday assumptions, many of which still prevail. She further proposes that Titian's strong empathy with women, stemming from a deep sense of identification with them, caused him always to render their

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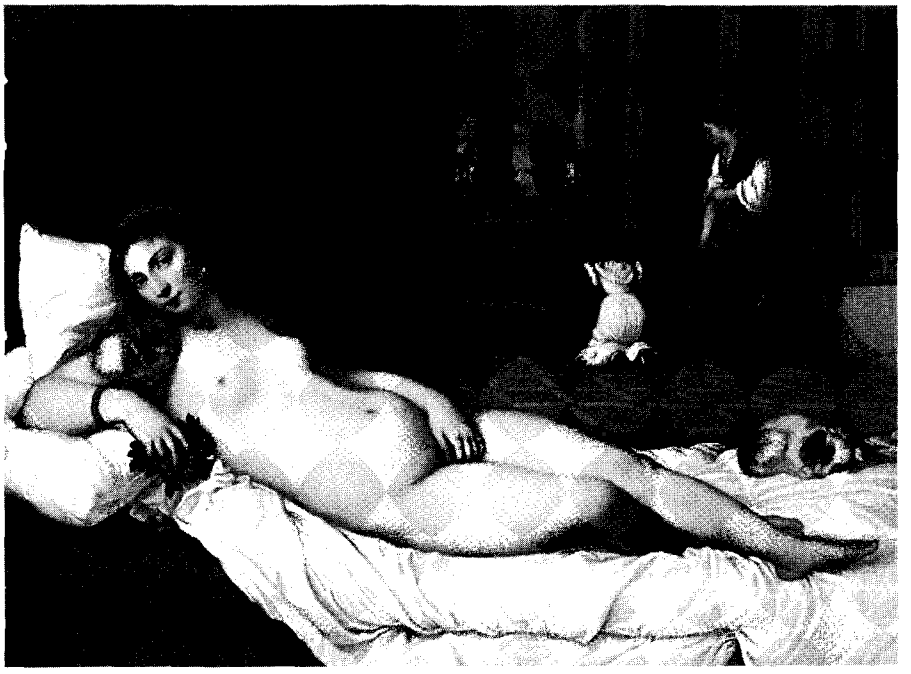
sexuality as individual, subjective, and powerful, as primary and independent—Venus-like, you might say.

Goffen omits Titian's holy women because she presumes that there were constraints on his rendering of them; and she may think that Titian's sympathy with female sexuality does not appear in his pictures of saints or the Virgin, despite his singularly creative treatment of them all. She is more interested in those quasi-allegorical compositions in which Titian exercised complete imaginative freedom, such as the *Woman with a Mirror* or the *Three Ages of Man*, where a shadowy and somewhat inert male is often seen in a close amorous relation with a brilliantly rendered female, whom Goffen sees commanding the scene and dictating the erotic terms.

One of Goffen's apparent reasons for writing this book was to express her impatience with a long tradition of writings, continued by some recent art historians, which insists that Titian's Venuses, together with his anonymous beauties such as *Flora*, *La Bella*, *Vanity*, and *Woman in a Fur Coat*, were intended as soft-core pornographic images, with the straightforward single aim of sexual arousal. Such an idea seems to have arisen years ago out of Titian's known friendship with the satirist Pietro Aretino, who wrote a lot of very explicit pornography along with much other coarse and scurrilous material that he was paid to produce.

Goffen is somewhat overheated in her defense of Titian against this charge, preaching largely to the converted or even beating a dead horse. The tempered beauty of the eroticism in Titian's anonymous women seems obviously at odds with the intentional distortion that is the core of pornographic representation. Plenty of the hard stuff remains from the sixteenth century, to show the required effect at the time; and the soft version—exemplified by the luscious, nipple-exposing, black-eyed dames often rendered by Palma Vecchio, who are excessively blonde-haired and half-clad in excessively full and emphatically unfastened chemises—is also unmistakable.

These girls are not beautiful, nor are the paintings; but they are slick and sexy. Instead of instantly pleasing, such paintings and their subjects are instantly troubling, like any pornography, in part because they deliberately seek to avoid either serious pictorial harmony or a serious stake in natural reality. Through Palma's insistence on certain parts and not their sum, many of his pictures show themselves to be forthright sexual fantasies inciting to lust, not dreams of a consuming erotic love, the kind that moves the earth and perhaps the sun and other stars.



Courtesy Yale University Press

TITIAN, *VENUS OF URBINO*, 1538

Goffen may believe, though she expresses this somewhat obliquely, that Titian's own imagination about sex was the kind often thought of as female; that he understood the sort of sexual desire that may possibly be linked to the capacity for overall corporeal arousal and the possibility of multiple orgasm, but which in any case is a physical desire that is always on tap, so to speak, and thus continually ready to blend with other experiences, including complex emotions, thoughts, and ideas. It can be contrasted with that sexual desire which is local and immediate, involving single-minded pursuit, concentrated action, hugely satisfactory release and collapse, followed by total absence of lust and the need to rebuild from the beginning, perhaps with some crude pictorial help.

Titian's *Flora*, who bears the name of an ancient Roman courtesan as well as that of a minor Roman goddess, also wears a fully gathered, sliding-off chemise and a head of artificially blonde hair, and you can find one of her nipples if you look for it. In her portrait, however, Titian is clearly engaging with the larger erotic imagination that is sustained, increased, and deepened by gratification, not the one that is quickly fulfilled and exhausted. This painting, unlike so many Palma versions, has been carefully developed and modulated and brought to fruition as an example of perfect artistic and erotic equilibrium, a beautifully composed painting of a beautiful real woman.

The painting bears gazing at for a long time and repeatedly, to permit its slow power and its breathing presence to work on the feelings. We are not being shown a female image meant for instantaneous effect. Flora, moreover, is not Venus, who has everything and does everything in every way. This might even be intended, Goffen remarks, as an ideal Lady, here rendered as both an antique courtesan and an ever-fresh flower goddess. There is a subtle action in this picture that is missing from Palma's cruder renderings. With her body still facing us, Flora looks downward out of the frame as she begins to turn in the same direction; but she seems to hesitate just an instant, before holding out her bouquet to the invisible lover who is not one of us watchers.

Venetian law at the time was severe about excess in clothing, with particular restrictions on the kinds and especially the amounts of fabric used. Stiff fines were imposed on tailors as well as on their customers. An extra pinch of daring in Palma's sexy images must have come from the clearly illegal yardage that went into those fluffy undone chemises—nothing like the restrained slide of Flora's drape. Great Venetian ladies did wear elaborate and becoming clothes as necessary complements to their rank and beauty, and powerful families could perhaps discreetly flout the law. Paintings also show that rich ceremonial robes were publicly worn by men in Venetian government and other institutions; but to wear ostentatious clothing as a clear sign of private wealth was not done.

Venetian custom, as Goffen points out, also imposed a purdah-like behavior on the ladies of its first families, even though they were often the repositories of great fortunes and great names. Ladies rarely went out in the street. They

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watched public festivals from the window or the balcony, and they certainly did not have their portraits painted. Many Venetian gentlemen did, but their wives were not portrayed to match, as they often were in all the other Italian cities.

Meanwhile, Venice was famous for its many highly visible courtesans, some wealthy, literate, and witty as well as beautiful, beautifully dressed, and beautifully housed. Booklets with engravings and descriptions of them were printed for the benefit of foreign visitors. To the dismay of many, their tastefully sumptuous clothes and their refined behavior made them indistinguishable from real ladies; and well-connected courtesans also got away with a certain number of illegal excesses of dress without paying the fines.

Did they have their portraits painted? They seem to have imitated ladies in this respect, too, at least in not letting their names be attached to any. Titian and Palma were only two of the many Venetian artists who painted nameless beauties wearing elaborate dresses, partial undress, and classical nudity; but Goffen hastens to tell us that there exists no documented and named portrait of any sixteenth-century Venetian courtesan—except one by Tintoretto, now lost, of the celebrated Veronica Franco. Of Titian's named female portrait subjects, all except the two of his own daughter were non-Venetian ladies.

Goffen is so anxious to keep Titian at a distance from dirty-mindedness that she plays down the likelihood that Flora and the Venus of Urbino and all his other Venuses and anonymous dressed-up beauties are portraits of specific courtesans or prostitutes, even though nobody knows which ones. If you define courtesan as harlot, then "pornography," or picturing whores, would be Titian's crime. And for Goffen, all pornography is nothing but an intolerable assault upon women, a form of rape. Since her main theme about Titian is his deep respect for women's sexuality, she can never read him as veering over even for a minute into any of the sixteenth-century sexual attitudes that she now anathematizes.

Goffen stresses instead Titian's preoccupation, and that of other Italian Renaissance painters, with the *paragone*. This denoted an esthetic competition or rivalry, borrowed from antiquity, testing which of the arts best represented Reality, or, if you preferred, Beauty—two aspects, one could say, of Truth. The *paragone* was a malleable idea, variously conceived as existing between Painting and Sculpture, between the Visual Arts and Literature, but also between Sight and Touch or Sight and Hearing, and between the Ancients and the Moderns; and further, by extension, between *disegno* and *colorito*, between rational, sculptural, masculine Florence and sensual, painterly, feminine Venice.

The *paragone* could even precipitate out as a rivalry between Titian and Michelangelo, the two longest-lived titans of High Renaissance Italy. These two artists—apart from daring to render Heaven and Olympus as if they were right here, to bring immortal creatures to life and immortalize the living so you could not tell the difference—were both internationally famous, both the close friends of nobles, kings, and popes, both competing for the same clientele. Leonardo and Raphael, the earlier contenders, were dead and out of the running by 1520, when Michelangelo and Titian were just getting fully under way.

Yet every Italian Renaissance painter's constant rival was Apelles, the famous artist of Greek antiquity, who was the court painter and the friend of Alexander the Great. And here is where Goffen's account of Titian's beauties comes in. No work by Apelles survives, only descriptions and anecdotes. The descriptions all include lifelikeness, the painted grapes that the birds peck at, the painted person that almost speaks: these were what indicated to later ages how high the stakes were.

The pertinent anecdote was about Apelles's portrait, commissioned by his master, of Alexander's dazzling mistress Campaspe, with whom the king was besotted. Apelles outdid himself in painting her likeness, and Alexander, perceiving from the picture that the painter appreciated her more than he did, rewarded the artist by handing Campaspe over to him. This was considered an equitable exchange: Alexander seems to have found that he liked her better in the picture. (A lesson for the ages, indeed.) Campaspe's own emotions and behavior had no role in the story, because her character and her feelings came to life only in the portrait. Apelles thus deserved to have her, because he knew how to see her, and her true calling was posing for him.

In this suggestive tale Goffen locates the equivalence of a beautiful painting and a beautiful woman, as she interprets its later understanding among Renaissance painters and patrons. A beautiful Titian painting of a beautiful woman would show first of all how well the great modern Venetian outdid his ancient Greek rival; but it would further exemplify the creative beauty of art as an equivalent of the transforming power of love, both simultaneously dwelling in

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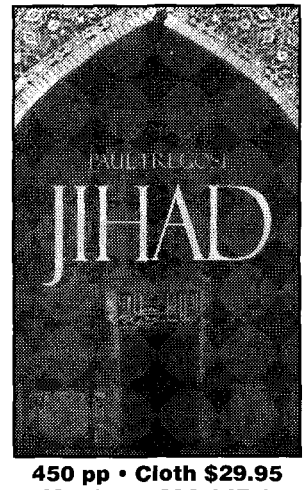

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the beautifully pictured beauty of a woman. Patrons would seek to own the beautiful image of a nameless beauty as the quintessential example of Titian's creative genius. Although the model's beauty would be specific and individual—a speaking likeness, alive and compelling—its perfect fusion with the beauty of Titian's picture was what mattered to the patron, not her identity; and this presumably was what mattered to Titian, too.

Nudity and pointed references to antique goddesses were fine, but they were unnecessary. A beautiful modern dress was appropriate as a setting for a perfect woman in a perfect painting, to exemplify the potent sway of beauty as generated by art. Goffen neglects to say that strong feelings of lust were also appropriate, not only to any viewer of such a work, but also to its depicted subject and to its maker—in no way ruled out, and perhaps even intensified, by the larger forces invested in it.

Goffen is amazingly defensive about the idea that loose morals, suggested by their gentle air of erotic readiness, might be attributed to the women who posed for these masterpieces. She takes great pains to establish, with several well-supported examples, that a Renaissance owner of such a painting might honor it as a companion, using it as the repository of his abiding affection along with his ephemeral desires. Then she puzzlingly goes on to insist that he would not implicate the subject's feelings in his own; and she offers this as if it were a crucial matter—as if attributing lust to the subject would have been a way to despise her, and that no patron in the sixteenth century would do that. But that is just what she accuses us modern viewers of doing when she appears to be asking why an anonymous Venetian beauty must always be a courtesan. To which one might respond, why not? Especially if respectable ladies never posed in Venice.

Goffen points to the portrait of the young, blonde, and picture-perfect noblewoman Joanna of Aragon, painted in a low-necked red dress by Raphael and his pupil Giulio Romano. This painting might well have been taken for the picture of a courtesan, she says, if subject and artists were not thoroughly documented. She suggests the same of Titian's highly idealized portrait of Isabella d'Este in open-collared rich garb. She also points, somewhat resentfully, to Titian's many portraits of delicious but nameless young men with melting gazes: these paintings are not automatically assumed to represent men who sold their sexual favors.

Goffen appears to be forever fighting her art-historical enemies, whom she finds assuming that Titian's beauties were all courtesans and the pictures all the equivalent of Palma's most lurid efforts; and further assuming that courtesans were de facto considered degraded and immoral. She knows that Titian's patrons must have assumed his unnamed Venetian models were whores of some sort, since professional models did not exist. She also believes that such gentlemen were not disposed to despise the beautiful subjects of pictures for that reason: a susceptible look was considered a normal female trait and no disgrace. There is even a letter of Titian's saying he preferred his local *puttane* for his *poesie* to the models he might find in Ferrara. Nobody seemed to worry that the Virgins were probably also posed for by whores, with their susceptibility suitably muted.

Yet Goffen seems to fear that we have all bought the enemy line, and that we automatically despise anyone dubbed a courtesan. She forgets that some might think worse of those dubbed ladies. Maybe the models were all exceptionally pretty housemaids? This learned and serious study has an annoying incoherence, born of Goffen's periodic need to express the correct sort of feminist prudery. She must unnecessarily tell us again and again that sensuality does not preclude morality and that a Renaissance woman's virtue was thought to appear in her beauty; must point out that the gaze of the pictured beauty captures the viewer's, not the other way; and must repeatedly append not very potent quotes from Luce Irigaray ("Here the unconscious is speaking. And how could it be otherwise? Above all when it speaks of sexual difference"), whom she also invokes while ridiculously complaining that "the clitoris [is] suppressed or omitted" in standard nude art. One might ask why (and how, exactly) the clitoris should be included in nude art, when it is not visible on naked women.

Goffen also refers to the delicate gesture with which a male figure in Bellini's *Feast of the Gods* lifts one inch of a sleeping nymph's hem as an "attempted rape," and the man as a "villain." And she will repeatedly have it that Titian the feminist has carefully made his subjects' clothes enlarge and enhance the power of their bodies, not seeing that fashion was doing this for everybody at the time. The historical perspective that Goffen wants to preach to her readers escapes her when this particular fit comes over her, upsetting the balance of her interesting book.

Goffen points out that the woman who posed for *Flora* also posed for both figures in the magnificent and mysterious *Sacred and Profane Love*, now known to have been commissioned as a marriage painting. There she is neither a courtesan nor a goddess. She is a bride: not the lady herself, who would not be portrayed in person, but the perfect beauty who stands for two aspects of the bride's being. One wears the wedding dress and the myrtle crown with sensual relish, holds the nuptial gift, and gazes alluringly at the bridegroom / viewer; the other, a draped nude holding a lifted lamp, gazes at her counterpart while lighting love's eternal fire. Together they expound the value—only lately prized in Venice, says Goffen—of the bride's fresh and steady conjugal lust. This had become a primary marital virtue in women, we are told, ever since contemporary medical science had deemed female orgasm necessary for conception, and thus for the dutiful perpetuation of dynasties.

The same value and virtue, Goffen explains, is being extolled in the peerless *Venus of Urbino*, plainly by the subject's own gesture. This vision is in fact another marriage picture, but this bride's role is being played by Venus herself, shown as if on her wedding night as she welcomes her approaching bridegroom. Meanwhile her maids stow her finery in one of her requisite twin marriage-chests, both prominent at the back of the room, and the dog in the foreground plays his part as the emblem of fidelity. We know that she really is Venus, too, because her pose imitates Giorgione's celebrated *Sleeping Venus* from a quarter of a century before, whose nearby Cupid identified her then.

The model for this Venus is the same woman who appears as Titian's *La Bella*, still gazing at us with her soft, intelligent eyes, and now wearing a precious dress of gold-embroidered blue to play the Ideal Beauty with all her finery on. The line traced by the two-inch edge of chemise showing above the neckline of this dress is a triumph of nuance, offering perhaps the greatest décolletage in all painting; and it is further set off by a plunging gold chain and the modish thin scarf with which Venetian women would soften the stiff and wide opening of a heavy dress.

Courtesans or fishwives, Flora/Bride and Venus/Bella show that their true calling was posing for Titian, in whatever contexts Titian wished to render them, some of which might well have been sacred. Of course, Goffen does not compare these two figures with Titian's saints and Virgins from the same decades in his career; but if we are permitted to

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consider these crossover possibilities for a moment, it looks as if the model for Titian's nude and pensive *Venus Anadyomene* of about 1525 might well have posed for his noble *Pesaro Madonna* in the same year, and certainly received the same sympathetic treatment from the painter in each case. Beauty is its own excuse for being.

Some years after the bridal Venus, Titian began painting a string of supine Venuses along with versions of a seated Venus looking in a mirror. In all of these, says Goffen, he was engaging with the *paragone* of the senses, demonstrating the supremacy of Sight over Touch and Hearing. He shows Venus redoubling her power by meeting her own gaze in the glass, while one cupid holds up the mirror and another confirms it by gazing at her. The fur stroking Venus's skin, the caress that she gives herself, and the cupid's touch on her arm are all submitted to the mirror's generative glance, as if to show that the eye creates all sensory joy.

Each of the five lush recumbent Venuses lies nude on her couch, with a well-dressed musician at her feet who twists away from his instrument to stare intently at her crotch, or at her breasts as Cupid caresses them. The music continues; but she turns away her head to nuzzle Cupid or to receive a garland from his hand, to look at her dog or to gaze into space, indifferent to the avid stare that sets the musician's hands in motion, even unwilling to play the flute that she sometimes holds. Music cannot move her; but the sight of her strongly moves the music-maker. Titian made the first three of these paintings in the late 1540s and early 1550s, the last two in the late 1560s. In all of them, Venus wears earrings and twin bracelets, a pearl or a gold necklace, and well-dressed blonde hair; her bed is always draped in white linen and heavy silk and shaded by a swagged silk curtain.

A short while later Titian painted his first *Rape of Lucretia*. In the sixth century before Christ, this virtuous and beautiful Roman wife's legendary rape by the Etruscan prince Sextus Tarquinius, together with her consequent public suicide against the protests of her husband, provoked an avenging Roman revolt against the Tarquins that ultimately established Rome's independence from Etruscan rule. Lucretia is thus the founding heroine of Roman power, not just a symbol of outraged conjugal faith. She is a constant subject in Renaissance art, sometimes nude, sometimes richly dressed, half-dressed, or classically draped, always turning a knife against herself. In the story, she

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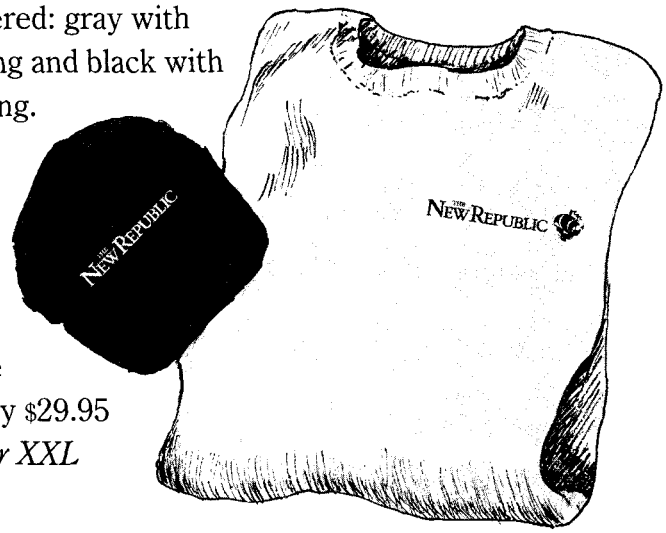

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publicly expresses her deep shame after the rape, and her need to kill herself right away lest she prove to be pregnant, or get used to the shame and stop feeling it, or lest people begin saying she had enjoyed the deed. Only her instant death will show Tarquin's crime as murderous, forcing instant harsh reprisals. She must give her dishonored life for the cause.

Yet Goffen has put Lucretia in the same chapter with the Magdalen, the one entitled "Presumed Guilty," because there were indeed doubts about the beauteous Lucretia's absolute chastity, and the usual suspicions of her share in the lust of her ravisher. Tarquin raped her by forcing a deal on her: either she submitted and nobody would ever know, or else he would kill her along with a stable-hand and put their bodies in bed together. He would then show her husband how his famously chaste wife had grossly dishonored him, while righteously boasting of discovering and killing the guilty couple. Lucretia submitted, but to pressure, not to force. Did her later shame include the memory of guilty pleasure?

Goffen is so outraged by this rape, and by such suggestions, and so convinced of Titian's outrage, that she cannot quite bring herself to observe that he, like many other painters, has built the doubts about Lucretia into his rendering of her. Goffen repeatedly reminds us of the sixteenth-century belief that women's sexual pleasure was much stronger than men's, but she cannot allow her feminist Titian to apply this notion, as so many did and still do, to the grim circumstances of real rape.

Goffen is right that Titian paints Lucretia's expression as pure terror, but she will not admit that he has carefully decked her as another lush nude Venus, complete with twin jeweled bracelets, earrings, pearl necklace, elegantly dressed golden hair, richly draped and curtained bed. There are no suggestions of the "torn away garments" that Goffen would like us to believe in—the gauzy scarf at her crotch is another of Venus's seductive appurtenances. It is Prince Tarquin's rich clothing that is disheveled, his sleeves shoved up, his stocking sliding down, his collar undone. As he lunges up the bed to thrust his knee between her thighs, he looks like her entranced musician at last driven mad by lust, abandoning his lute to draw his knife and force the enticing goddess to look at him for once.

Goffen's eye is deceiving her in one or two other places, notably in her first illustration of Titian's instinct for the female viewpoint, by contrast to his contemporaries. Goffen is impressed by the way Titian, in his early Paduan fresco of a modern-dress *Miracle of the Jealous Husband*, fills the panel with the extreme violence of an unjustly jealous husband's attack on his innocent wife. He holds her by the hair and stabs her repeatedly in the breast as she lies twisted at his feet with her skirt rucked up, in a landscape far from any witnesses. Already this is an outraged Titian, thinks Goffen, feeling the woman's abject terror for her life and physical pain more vividly than any other aspect of this tale, which recounts the several episodes in one of Saint Anthony's miracles.

Goffen wishes to contrast this panel with a relief sculpture of the same subject, made a few years later by Dentone and Cosini. This carving shows several anxious figures clustering around in classical costume, as the wife falls over, her head drops, and her husband's fierce hand yanks her upwards by the neck of her garment—but Goffen claims the sculptors have "omitted the deadly knife," suggesting that this husband offers milder violence and this wife is less threatened, even saying that this is not a "bloody drama" like the fresco. But it is. This woman's breast, too, is already stabbed, her blood already flows, and the deadly knife is right there, center stage, raised to strike again much as in Titian's version—even though the husband's arm and body are being pulled at by men who try to stop him, and two other people are there to break the lady's fall. Granted, this version is more theatrical and Titian's version is more cinematic; yet these scenes are equally violent and attentive to the half-killed woman, though her draperies stay decorous in the stone version and there are other people about. But Goffen refuses to see the knife and the carved wound with its drops of marble blood, so that her fresco hero can get all the more credit.

Goffen candidly admits that there is very little evidence about Titian's own intimate relations with individual women. What remains, moreover, is irreproachable: a fact which makes quite easy a positive interpretation of all his painted ones. He lived with a woman named Cornelia, who had their first son in 1524 and became his wife after their second son's birth in 1525. She seems to have died unexpectedly, to Titian's known great sorrow, after the birth in about 1530 of their daughter Lavinia, whom Titian was also known to love very much.

Who was Cornelia? Did she ever pose for him, as Venus or Virgin? Nothing more is recorded about her. Titian never married again, and he had no recorded amorous liaisons with anybody else of either sex, though fictional beloveds were invented for him by later generations. His friend Aretino says that Titian loved flirting with women, kissing and fondling them, or admiring and entertaining them, but that he was no steady frequenter of brothels like Aretino himself. One must assume that the painter was really too busy.

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The Tender Democrat

BY ROCHELLE GURSTEIN

Civility: Manners, Morals, and the Etiquette of Democracy by Stephen L. Carter

(Basic Books, 338 pp., $25)

Civility, or rather its absence, is a subject of great concern today. Journalists, politicians, social critics, professors, and ordinary Americans are worried. In 1996, *U.S. News & World Report* ran a cover story entitled "The American Uncivil Wars," and reported the results of a poll which since have become the common lore of commentators on civility: 89 percent of those questioned think that incivility is a serious problem, and 78 percent believe that the problem has worsened over the past decade. The respondents were asked, rather bizarrely, to rank the professions according to civility; lawyers, journalists, and politicians were placed lower than professional athletes. Since no definition of civility and no means of measuring its decline were provided, it is hard to know what to make of these results.

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Stephen L. Carter repeats these findings on the opening page of his book. He has no doubt about their meaning. Angry drivers about to explode on the highway, rude sales clerks, the street fashion of "drooping pants," vile rap lyrics, violence on television and in movies, exploitative advertising that appeals to base instincts, the telephone sales pitch that invades the privacy of the home, violent metaphors in ordinary language, hate speech, mud-slinging political campaigns, the "demonization" of political opponents, obscenity and nastiness in cyberspace: for Carter, these are unmistakable signs of a "crisis of civility" that is threatening nothing less than democracy in America. And it is not only democracy that is at risk. Carter gravely warns that the crisis of civility is also "part of a larger crisis of morality." And, even more ponderously, "because morality is what ultimately distinguishes humans from other animals, the crisis is ultimately one of humanity."

I would like to report that a crisis of such magnitude has found a social critic equal to the task, but Carter falls regrettably short. Even if it is not quite the apocalypse that Carter imagines, the subject of incivility certainly deserves serious and nuanced consideration, and Carter is certainly sincere and well-meaning. His aim is to "construct a society based on civility," and he will do so by "reentangl[ing] etiquette and ethics." It is a grandiose project, and Carter is nothing if not confident. In the opening pages, he announces the single cause of incivility: selfishness. And with just as much certainty, he offers a simple solution: people need to make sacrifices.

It is hardly news that selfishness is a threat to democracy. Social critics from Alexis de Tocqueville to Christopher Lasch have laid bare the insidious ways that egoism, individualism, and narcissism destroy the conditions that make shared life possible. What is novel about Carter's book is his insistence that the antidote to selfishness is sacrifice, and that only religious faith can provide the basis for sacrifice. We should call this ethos, he says, "sacrificial civility"; and by adhering to its rules of "etiquette," democracy in America will be redeemed.

A great deal of the book is devoted to fleshing out these peculiar notions. Carter defines civility as an "attitude of respect, even love for our fellow citizens." "The key to reconstructing civility ... is for all of us to learn anew the virtue of acting with love toward our neighbors." Just in case we hadn't heard, Carter instructs us that "love of neighbor has long been a tenet of Judaism and Christianity." He also acknowledges that "loving the neighbor is hard work." Then, in what is a characteristic and jarring feature of his writing, he abruptly shifts tones from hard-headed realism to gushing sentiment: universal love comes from the recognition that every "human being, whatever his or her strengths, weaknesses, and simple complexities [sic], is also a part of God's creation." Thus in loving others we love God, and "we should be struck with awe at the fact that we are face to face with a part of God's work." Since the command to love admits no exception, "even a thug is entitled to the respect that we owe our neighbors." To which the tough, committed democrat in him immediately adds in parentheses: "Which is not to say that civility forbids us ever to fight back."

The burden of Carter's argument is to show that his religious doctrine is better equipped than any other to further democratic life. Unfortunately, Carter makes no serious effort to make his vision come alive for the non-believers in this democracy, nor does he demonstrate its necessity for democracy generally. Is Carter calling for more civility in America or for more religion in America? They are not the same thing.

Carter apparently believes the connection between civility and democracy is so obvious that he may resort only to homilies, such as "democracy without civility is like dieting without discipline," or approvingly quote other people's vague formulations, such as "democracy itself 'can be seen not only as a type of government but as a system of manners, a form of social life.'" He does not see that his call for self-sacrifice seems equally suitable to theocracy, monarchy, or oligarchy, which have at their core hierarchy and deference.

Carter's most focused discussion appears in a chapter about "democratic dialogue." To his credit, he does not want to shy away from "passionate disagreement," nor does he equate civility with consensus. He believes that disagreement generates discussion, and he wants to expand discussion through "civil listening" and respect for opponents: "By encouraging us to see even those with whom we disagree as full equals before God, civility enables us to hold the respectful dialogues without which democratic decision-making is impossible."

But must I really see Stephen Carter as nothing less than my equal before God when I disagree with him? I don't think so, though I intend to disagree with him respectfully. And also firmly, for his examples of the sacrifices required by his version of civility do not go very far in illuminating the connection between

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Sunday Evening

Ideas as crystals and the logic of a violin:
The intricate evasions warming up again
For another raid on the inarticulate. And soon
The morning melody begins, the oranges and the tea,
The introspective walk about the neighborhood,
The ambient noise, the low lapping of water over stones.
The peace one finds encounters one alone,
In the memories of books, or half-remembered songs,
Or in the mild enchantments of the passive mood:
To hesitate, to brood, to linger in the library and then,
As from some green and sunny chair, arise and go.
The noons seem darker, and the adolescent
Boys that used to hang around the parking lot are gone.
More water in the eyes, more dissonant musicians in the subways,
And from the font of sense a constant, incidental drone.
It *is* a kind of reconfiguration, and the solitary exercise
That seeks to reaffirm its name seems hollow. The sun is lower in the sky,
And as one turns towards what had felt like home,
The windows start to flicker with a loveless flame,
As though the chambers they concealed were empty. Is this
How heaven feels? The same perspective from a different room,
Inhabiting a prospect seen from someone else's balcony
In a suspended moment—as a silver airplane silently ascends
And life, at least as one has known it, slides away?

I thought that people understood these things.
They show the gradual encroachment of a vast,
Impersonal system of exchanges on that innermost domain
In which each object meant another one, all singing each to each
In a beautiful regress of forgetting. Nature as a language
Faithful to its terms, yet with an almost human face
That took the dark, romantic movements of desire, love, and loss
And gave them flesh and brought them into view;
Replaced by emblems of a rarified sublime,
Like Cantor's Paradise, or Edward Witten staring into space
As the leaves fell and a little dog raced through them in the park.
Was any of that mine? Was it ever anyone's?
Time makes things seem more solid than they were,
Yet these imaginary things—the dolphins and the bells, the sunny terrace
And the bright, green wings, the distant islet on the lake—
Were never barriers, but conditions of mere being, an enchanting haze
That takes one in and like a mild surprise gives way,
As though the things that one had strained against were shards of space.
The evening air feels sweeter. The moon,
Emerging from a maze of clouds into the open sky,
Casts a thin light on the trees. Infinitely far away,
One almost seems to hear—as though the fingers of a solitary giant
Traced the pure and abstract schema of those strings
In a private movement of delight—the soundless syllables'
Ambiguous undulations, like the murmur of bees.

JOHN KOETHE

civility and democracy. Not losing one's temper during heated disagreements is, for Carter, "a rather basic sacrifice," as is "being respectful to those with whom I strongly disagree," since it is "easier" and "feels more natural" to be "rude and dismissive." Other examples include going to P.T.A. meetings or leading a Boy Scout troop when one would "rather be watching television," and, in the same sentence, "going off to fight for our country when we would rather be safe at home." Carter also claims that "perhaps the greatest sacrifice that all of us must make ... is to try to live our own lives in a way that models civility ... for the benefit of our children."

These "sacrifices," if that is the right word, range from the prosaic to the glorious; and thus one might imagine that there are many reasons and motives for them. Carter is certainly confusing civility with altruism, benevolence, volunteerism, or patriotism. It is civic to fight for one's country, but in what sense is it civil? But Carter is more of a preacher than a thinker. He sticks to his tried and true formulation: "There is the thing that I should do to show my love for others, and there is the thing that I would rather do, out of a desire for my own pleasure and comfort." In Carter's one-dimensional view of the world, people just need to do the right thing: "The rich man would prefer to keep his money. The segregationist would prefer to go on segregating. We are asking them to yield their own preferences for a larger good."

Carter's discussion of sacrifice is simplistic and shallow, oblivious to the specter of tragedy that haunts all acts of genuine sacrifice, and unmindful of the obdurate nature of sin. But Carter's ideal is not devotion to a particular religion, it is religiosity. Thus he blends not only different denominations but different religions into one homogenous benevolent mass. "Where do we learn to put aside our own desires and even needs for the sake of the larger good?... We go to our churches, our synagogues, our mosques, and our temples. In short, we go to God." Are secular Americans, then, essentially uncivil? And is faith to be valued mainly for its moral and social usefulness?

This bland, generalized faith is certainly not an invention of our own time. As many historians and theologians have shown, evangelical Protestantism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries anticipated many of its therapeutic features, the tenor of which is best captured by H. Richard Niebuhr: "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross."

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It is entirely fitting that Carter has sampled early evangelical sermons and liberally sprinkles his text with them.

Thus, in what he believes is a quotation that demonstrates the link between civility and democracy, Carter sets out an entry from the evangelist William Wilberforce's diary: "God Almighty has set before me two great objects, the suppression of the slave trade and the reformation of manners." Instead of pondering how reforms of such enormously different moral and political weight could be so carelessly yoked together, Carter announces that "the connection makes perfect sense: enslaving other human beings is simply an extreme form of the lack of respect for their createdness that allows us to be rude. In both cases, we violate the requirement to love our neighbors." Slavery, a form of rudeness!

And this is not a momentary lapse. Thus, in what he no doubt believes is a courageous act of following his logic wherever it leads him, Carter declares that people who are serious about ridding the world of negative campaign ads must make a sacrifice: "Vote against A (who shares our politics) and in favor of B (who does not) in order to penalize A for the sleazy nastiness of his campaign." The sacrifice? "You must put aside an issue of great importance to you." What does this mean in practice? One sacrifices one's principles as a form of self-abnegation, even when that means voting for a person who has undemocratic or dangerous ideas and policies? And this in the name of nicer, cleaner political campaigns? And matters are made significantly worse by another bizarre example, with which Carter wishes to show that he knows the difference between politeness and civility: "A concentration camp guard possessing the most exquisite good manners is a concentration camp guard nonetheless. His willingness to say, 'Would you mind stepping into the gas chamber, sir?' is a mark only of horror." (Apparently Carter has never heard of *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*, Tadeusz Borowski's chilling volume of stories about the death camps.)

Given Carter's single-minded attachment to sacrifice, it is not clear why he felt that he needed any larger concept such as civility or manners. But when he is not viewing the world as a "Christian," Carter likes to see the world as a sociologist. Thus he repeats the sociological truism that we live in a world of strangers and that manners ease our interactions with them: "Civility is a virtue that equips us for everyday life with strangers, our daily democratic train ride with people we do not like or do not even know." He then goes on to equate civility with manners, taking as his starting point Norbert Elias's pioneering work *The Civilizing Process*, which traced the way people gained mastery over their bodily functions and urges through "the civilizing process." By analyzing etiquette books from the Middle Ages to the early twentieth century, Elias found that, as courtly manners were adopted throughout society, increasing attention was paid to the way that "outward bodily propriety" or "decency" distinguished "civilized" people from "barbarians" or animals. This idea, which was only one aspect of Elias's complicated study, becomes, in Carter's hands, the defining feature of civility: "Distinguishing ourselves from other animals—or, if you prefer, displaying our humanity—is what civility is all about."

As to what civil life looks like, Carter is happy to provide a personal anecdote. In a chapter entitled "Welcoming the Stranger," he includes a trite description of the movement away from the "thick network of relationships" that characterized pre-modern "community" to the free, though alienating, life of modern urban "society." And this comes immediately after "A Dark, Skinny Stranger in Cleveland Park," a homespun tale of his family's move to a white neighborhood in Washington, D.C. in 1966. He recalls that his loneliness and his fears of rejection were eased by the generosity of a Jewish neighbor who brought over a welcome tray of cream cheese and jelly sandwiches. Musing on the rarity of "those who are truly moved by [civility] to love their fellow human beings," Carter is moved to rhapsody:

> I learned that truth in 1966, and, to this day, I can close my eyes and feel on my tongue the smooth, slick sweetness of the cream cheese and jelly sandwiches that I gobbled on that summer afternoon when I discovered how a single act of genuine and unassuming civility can change a life forever.

It is an emotionally charged reminiscence for the writer; but for the reader it seems small and banal, especially in the light of Carter's lofty claims for civility. He returns to it in the final lines of the book, where he describes a summer stroll in a cemetery with his family. They come upon a tombstone, and its inscription about the "generosity of spirit which assumes the best, not the worst, of the stranger" so deeply moves him that Carter struggles to express his own equivalent sentiment: "To which I can only add: don't forget the cream cheese and jelly sandwiches." To which he immediately adds the last word of the book, "Amen."

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God is a dangerous idea—whether animistic or vitalistic, theistic or deistic—perverting justice in ethics and politics. Of ancient philosophies Epicureanism alone disposed of this problem with coherent doctrines about chance/necessary interaction of atoms, about evolutionary development, and about basic biological drives. The historical Jesus agreed more with this than with Judaism—more atheist/realist than theist/idealist—as indicated by a recently unearthed document that claims to be enigmatic *ipsissima verba* of Jesus noted by an evidently puzzled student who wandered with him. Jack Hannah corroborates this claim with other independent ancient documents. All pertinent texts and commentary are provided.

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Glib sociology coupled with impressionistic jottings also mar his chapter entitled "The Embarrassment of Free Will." How is our understanding of the tensions between individual and society, freedom and responsibility, deepened by yet another casual centrist criticism of "the laissez-faire economic vision of some on the right" and "the laissez-faire social vision of some on the left"? Or by yet another reiteration of the sociological platitude that "communities are in large measure defined by their norms—the expectations that they place on their members—even when the norms do not have the force of law"? In practice, "the freedom problem," as he quaintly calls it, boils down to wearing a tie to the office if that is the "accepted norm," or choosing the proper fork at dinner. The "freedom problem" has rarely been so thoroughly trivialized.

Carter's understanding of history is no more strenuous than his understanding of concepts:

> So where did all the civility go? And when? I have read all the theories.... Although many of these theories seem to me to hold bits and pieces of the truth, they nevertheless are nibbling around the edges. As I grope for a thicker, more filling plate of reasons, I keep coming back to my long-standing hunch that it all began to go bad around 1965, when, as somebody said, everything seemed to happen at once. That was the year that America, quite suddenly, became postmodern. Many venerable American traditions—some wonderful, some horrible—all withered at the same time. And what has that to do with civility? Let us look and see.

Granted he is not a historian, but isn't it Carter's responsibility as "a student of civility" to provide a more rigorous historical account than his "long-standing hunch that it all began to go bad around 1965"? After all, a large literature on the subject does exist.

The literature on the evolution of civility treats it as a feature of a new sensibility that both accompanied and fostered liberalism in the eighteenth century. More than anyone else, this literature is associated with J.G.A. Pocock's work on the history of political thought. Our modern notion of civility turns out to be the fruit of sustained debate about the nature, the development, and the functioning of commercial society, and it is as much a child of Scottish moral philosophy, rhetoric, and aesthetics as of political economy and liberal political thought.

It was within the context of the emergence of commercial society that politeness became not only a social ideal but an alternative to the pursuit of civic virtue. This helps to explain why we associate civility not only with manners and morals, but also with civil liberty, civil rights, and civil law. Adam Smith, David Hume, and other Enlightenment thinkers believed that the division and the diversification of labor would raise the standard of living and increase the wealth of nations, which, in turn, would lead to widespread refinement and cosmopolitanism.

Since they were among the last disputants in the long-standing quarrel between the ancients and the moderns, their ideas were formed in opposition to the ancients. Thus they rejected the classical definition of civic liberty—the active virtue of a citizen exercising equal deference—in favor of civil liberty or what we today call liberalism—freedom from political participation. Civil liberty meant freedom to trade and to make contracts, to pursue the private goods of wealth and leisure in public; and the modern individual was content to pay others to perform what had previously been understood as his own civic duties. Instead of the public-spiritedness of civic virtue, there emerged the liberal conception of government as the administration of law, with civil servants manning state bureaucracies; likewise, instead of the unspecialized citizen-warrior, there were civilians in various and specialized roles with a professional, standing army to protect them.

The champions of commercial society effectively re-envisioned the good life: "urbanity, politeness, and civility" would more than compensate for the loss of civic virtue. Eighteenth-century moderns took pride in their "refined passions" and their "polished manners"; these were the qualities that marked their superiority over the ancients. Hume spoke for his age when he chastised the ancients for their want of "delicacy," "polite deference and respect," and "civility"; and when he celebrated the modern individual who was "commercial" and "cultivated," "polite" and "refined," "sociable," "sentimental," and "sympathetic," and in possession of taste.

But rules of etiquette (to which Stephen Carter is so attached) were simply not a part of this discourse. One simply knew how to speak and how to act, that is, one became a certain kind of person, primarily through the social art of conversation, what Hume called "the most useful and agreeable of any [art]." And conversation flourished in a sphere that belonged neither to the court, the state, nor the private domain of the household—but in taverns, coffeehouses, salons, dances, and gentlemen's clubs.

The trouble with the new ideal was that politeness could degenerate, in Hume's words, into "affectation and foppery, disguise and insincerity." People could ape elegant manners without actually acquiring the requisite moral character, and civility then became a hollow form. In recent years a number of historians—notably Karen Halttunen in *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, Kenneth Cmiel in *Democratic Eloquence*, John Kasson in *Rudeness and Civility*, and Richard Bushman in *The Refinement of America*—have explored the development of gentility in America, studying not only its widespread practice but also the ever-mounting fears about artificiality, hypocrisy, and corruption that it entailed. In the history of civility in America, habits of mind associated with Puritanism and Republicanism fueled suspicions of luxury and refinement, of snobbery and aristocratic pretension. And the social and economic fluidity of city life led many Americans to wonder what might lie behind the genteel appearance of strangers, even as they turned ever more obsessively to etiquette books to decipher society and learn how to behave.

Kasson's *Rudeness and Civility* figures large in Carter's citations (one imagines that the title appeared in a computer search under the keyword "civility"), though Carter inexplicably ignores the many tensions between refinement and democracy that Kasson sets out. Yet it is precisely these tensions that helped to give civility a bad name, and to discredit associated terms such as refinement, politeness, elegance, decorum, propriety, decency, reserve, and reticence. This should give pause to anyone who wants to revive civility today. In fact, during the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century, gentility was twisted into Santayana's memorable mocking phrase "the genteel tradition," and a younger generation of cultural critics blamed it for the sterility and the paucity of American arts and letters, as well as for the suffocating over-refinement of daily life.

At the same time, politeness, decorum, and reticence were increasingly associated with "civilized sexual morality." Sex reformers held its stringent moral code responsible not only for various neuroses and perversions (which Freud candidly dissected), but also for a fetid atmosphere of hypocrisy, which had given rise to the notorious "double standard" for men and a "conspiracy of silence" about contraception. New agencies of exposure proliferated, including frank discussions of birth control, realist novels about the underside of American life, and mass-circulation journalism specializing in invasive and sensational

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stories. The advocates of exposure insisted that truth more than compensated for any violation of propriety or manners. And they insisted that only prudes, prigs, puritans, or censors—people who had something to hide—would object. In this opening volley in the battle between moderns and Victorians, those on the side of exposure situated themselves on the side of personal freedom, democracy, and progress. Civility became just another word for bourgeois morality, or, more baldly, hypocrisy.

As this brief history shows, there is simply no historical basis in American life for Carter's strange notion of "sacrificial civility." And his notions about renewing civility are equally eccentric. After stating bromide after bromide about civility throughout the book, he consolidates fifteen of them in a concluding chapter called "The Etiquette of Democracy." Carter somehow believes that it is possible to graft these rules onto present-day society, and that the family and religious institutions will teach them, as if civility were just a question of rules.

If civility is to be revived today, it is not rules of etiquette that are needed, but practices in which it can be cultivated. But even if it were possible to strengthen the practices that foster civility, it is not clear how this would further democracy. After all, politics and religion are subjects different in kind from manners, morals, aesthetics, and general knowledge about the world, which were once at the heart of polite conversation. Conversation was meant to please and to delight one's companions; it did not involve debate or deliberation about the public good, which could all too easily degenerate into contentious dispute.

As for Carter's "sacrificial civility," its chances for success seem equally remote. This is not only because urging people to love strangers as a means of loving God will be compelling only to the faithful, but also because his description of incivility as selfishness only partially captures what is wrong with contemporary social and political life. Rudeness does plague our daily life in all the ways that Carter mentions, but rudeness can sometimes be a form of honesty; and our daily life is plagued by something more insidious than rudeness—vulgarity, a threat that is no longer recognized today since the judgment of vulgarity is regarded as condescension or elitism. Before the twentieth century, however, vulgarity was understood as the opposite of politeness, and was closely associated with mediocrity, conformism, crassness, and triviality.

It is worth remembering that nineteenth-century critics like Tocqueville, Mill, and Arnold attributed these qualities to mass democracy, and later in the century John Ruskin and William Morris blamed industrial capitalism and the degradation of labor for their prevalence. All of them feared leveling, by which they meant making the lowest common denominator the standard of all things. Standardization, blandness, conformism, mediocrity, crassness, banality—more than ever before, these are the defining features of our common world. Until Stephen Carter can explain how "sacrificial civility" will elevate the tone of our social and public life as well as enlarge its aspirations, we must look elsewhere for answers.

ROCHELLE GURSTEIN is the author of *The Repeal of Reticence: America's Cultural and Legal Struggles over Free Speech, Obscenity, Sexual Liberation, and Modern Art* (Hill and Wang).

TRB *continued from page 4*

secondary could still play a significant role in deciding the election.

Of course, shrinking midterm-election turnout has been a pernicious fact of American political life for decades now. But we may be reaching the dangerous point where low turnout starts to feed on itself. In a system premised on low turnout, both parties have an incentive to run ideologically extreme campaigns targeted at their hard-core voters. (On the Democratic side, this usually takes the form of scaring the elderly about alleged GOP plans to dismantle Social Security.)

Once in power, however, the representatives these elections produce must compromise and cut deals to get things done. Alternatively, they stick to their polarized positions and nothing gets accomplished. Thus a gap opens between campaign rhetoric that promises both results and ideological purity, on the one hand, and actual governance that is either ideologically flexible or ineffectual, on the other. The public comes to see the words of politicians as meaningless—and stays home on Election Day.

Ironically, it is precisely the most flexible and nonideological members of the House and Senate who will decide what happens in an impeachment proceeding, which is just the way the Founding Fathers wanted it. They knew that impeachment, by its very nature, would have a tendency to become a fiercely partisan process. To a degree largely unrecognized today, a main concern of the men who wrote the impeachment clauses of the Constitution was to ensure procedural fairness for the accused. Alexander Hamilton wrote in *Federalist 65* that the fateful decision to remove a president from office should be made by people with the "requisite neutrality." Hence, they chose the relatively numerous and ideologically diverse Senate as the decision-making body—the Supreme Court was the other option—and required a two-thirds vote for conviction.

Thus, even if Republicans succeed in electing a larger and more conservative majority in the House, and even if they extend their control over the Senate to nearly 60 seats, they could not convict Clinton without the support of a significant number of moderates, including at least a few middle-of-the-road Democrats. It will be interesting to see whether the Republicans' efforts to spread as much dirt as possible about Clinton in advance of the November election helps or hurts their prospects of gaining the swing votes they'll eventually need to get rid of him. Then again, maybe they'd be just as happy to lose the impeachment fight by a vote or two and keep a crippled Clinton in office all the way to 2000.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Kvetcher in the rye

LAST WEEK, AS SHE KICKED OFF A 14-city book tour to promote her new memoir, Joyce Maynard took a moment to bid farewell to all of her fans in cyberspace. "I'm leavin' on a jet plane," Maynard told the crowd at *www.joycemaynard.com*. Her giddiness is understandable, even if her reliance on John Denver is not. Though Maynard's memoir, a crude, narcissistic book full of hurtful revelations about J.D. Salinger, was not well-received at first ("The worst book ever written," predicted *The Washington Post*'s Jonathan Yardley), *At Home in the World* is now getting a second look. In *The New York Times Magazine*, Larissa MacFarquhar called Maynard's book "surprisingly powerful." Last week, in *Slate*, Cynthia Kling wrote that Maynard's book "is getting the most viciously unfair treatment that I've ever seen in my whole life." And, on September 8, the revisionism became official, or officious, when Michiko Kakutani defended the thing in the *Times*.

NO SUCH LUCK FOR J.D. SALINGER. His decision to break off a relationship with this starry-eyed, banana-bread-baking teen, whom he had first pursued after spotting her photo on the cover of the *Times Magazine*, appears to have tarnished his reputation as America's greatest literary sentimentalist. Salinger is "creepy" (*Slate*); "unfeeling . . . to say the least" (Katha Pollitt in the *Times* book review); "hideous . . . a brute . . . dumps a vulnerable teenager cruelly and without explanation" (*Time*). There is talk of "exploitation," abuse of power, unreciprocated oral sex: the president and the intern *avant la lettre*.

WELL, I'VE READ *AT HOME IN THE World* and can assure you in no uncertain terms that Joyce Maynard's reclusive beau is no Bill Clinton. In fact, he's sort of a dreamboat. In the first months of their relationship—before his Phoebe Caulfield epigone started doing dumb things like leaving apple cores on the couch and asking the god of letters to blurb her own book—Salinger was clearly in love with Maynard. "You make me want to break out the champagne," he says. "We have something wonderful here, you know, kiddo." It's not hard to see what drew Salinger to the girl wonder of Doubleday Publishing. With her blunt-cut bangs and impudent, confident chatter, the young Maynard evokes the bookish ingenues of Salinger's fiction—Franny Glass, Phoebe Caulfield, and the grave, well-behaved Esmé, who writes "extremely articulate letters" and who informs her new gentleman friend that she's not surprised he's enjoyed her company: "I'm quite communicative for my age."

IN THE REVIEWS, SALINGER COMES off as a dour crackpot, whose most cherished pleasures are deflowering reluctant teens and tucking into a tasty meal of frozen Birds Eye peas al fresco. To me, though, "Jerry" seems a prince of a man—a gentle, wisecracking single dad, who's having a grand old time of it in his shabby-chic ranch house. He rents old movies, teaches Joyce to fox-trot, smokes his own salmon. ("Come to think of it, the $15.99 a pound they charge at Bloomingdale's is a bargain," he grumbles after the flue explodes in his face.) Knowing that Joyce loves to perform in plays, he shyly mentions that it might be fun for the two of them to act scenes from Shakespeare in his living room. "*Antony and Cleopatra*, maybe, for starters," he says happily.

BY HER OWN ACCOUNT, SALINGER treats the young Maynard with an anxious tenderness, brushing her hair, kneeling down to tie her sneakers, wrapping her shoulders with a blanket at the slightest chill. The honey even takes her to Bloomingdale's, where he fulfills every young girl's dream, buying her a black cashmere coat—$425, even in 1972. In retrospect, Maynard is unimpressed: the coat, she sniffs, was more "appropriate for members of a ladies' auxiliary." At the time, though, the spokesperson for the Alienated and Anti-Materialistic Youth of America took the gift.

SALINGER BELIEVED IN MAYNARD and tried to nurture her talents. He tells her that she should pour her "whole self" into her writing; that she should never stop writing whatever it is she feels she must write about; that she should be "cool" about things, never letting the opinion of others worry or sadden her. When she shows him a piece she has written for *McCall's* titled "My Parents Are My Friends," Salinger grows depressed. "Clever," he tells her. "Eminently publishable. And there wasn't one honest sentence in the whole damn thing. Your father's an alcoholic, for God's sake."

MAYNARD, THOUGH, MISUNDERstands her mentor's sensible counsel. Salinger was telling her to avoid writing pieces that are actively silly, false, and dishonest. He was not suggesting that she actually *write* about her father's alcoholism, her mother's lewd cuddles, her adolescent anorexia and her post-adolescent bulimia, her Luvs and Huggies and Honey Nut Cheerios, her personal odors and domestic effluvia, and, of course, the various mortifications that she suffered at the hands of Salinger—all the while smugly crediting Mr. Bananafish himself for giving her the courage to be so "honest."

THE REVIEWERS HAVE SALINGER dumping Maynard abruptly, out of the blue—"cruelly and without explanation" is how *Time* puts it. In fact, the reasons for Salinger's disillusionment could not be clearer. For all his homeopathic goofiness, Salinger comes off as serious, as a person who loves Jane Austen and Kafka's diaries, who believes in discipline and excellence and craft. Maynard, meanwhile, is "not . . . a reader"; she is, she tells us, "a television-watcher." As their relationship progresses, Salinger grows increasingly depressed by her shallowness, and his love slowly withdraws from her, like a puddle drying up. "Perhaps you're like the rest of them after all," he tells her. Maynard thinks not and tries to persuade him "that my continued interest in things like bookstore appearances and interviews is not unforgivable." The final blow comes when Maynard slips Salinger's number to her new friends in the publishing world, who in turn pass it to *Time* magazine. Salinger is aghast. "All these years, I've done everything I could to maintain my privacy," he says. "Now *Time* has my phone number. There's no hope for you, Joyce." A few weeks later, on a Florida beach, Salinger banishes her with a shudder.

YOU CAN ARGUE, I GUESS, THAT Salinger was unfair to Maynard, that he slighted her genius, that he gave short shrift to this teenage Louise Colet throwing up in his bathroom and banging out her prom pieces on his Selectric. But you can't claim he didn't give her an explanation. This is a canard, right up there with Pollitt's claim that Salinger's response to young Joyce's sexual difficulty was "unfeeling." For God's sake, the man brought her squash and tamari sauce in bed, massaged her temples, kneaded her pressure points, took her to specialists, stayed up all night poring over the *Materia Medica*. What do we want—cigars?

RUTH SHALIT

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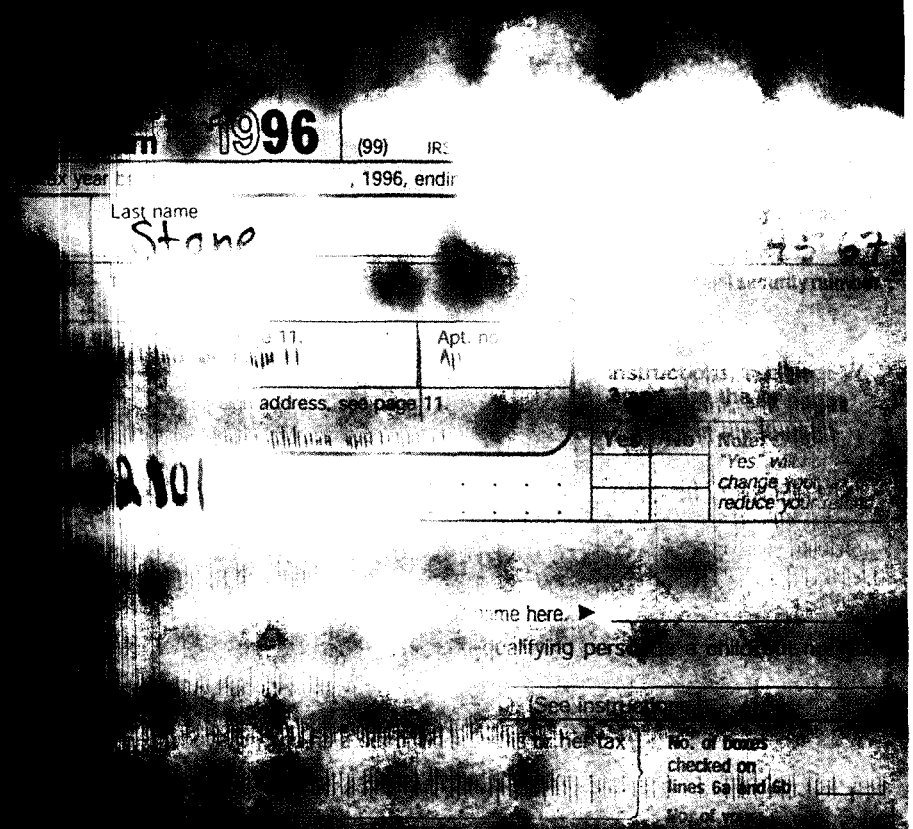

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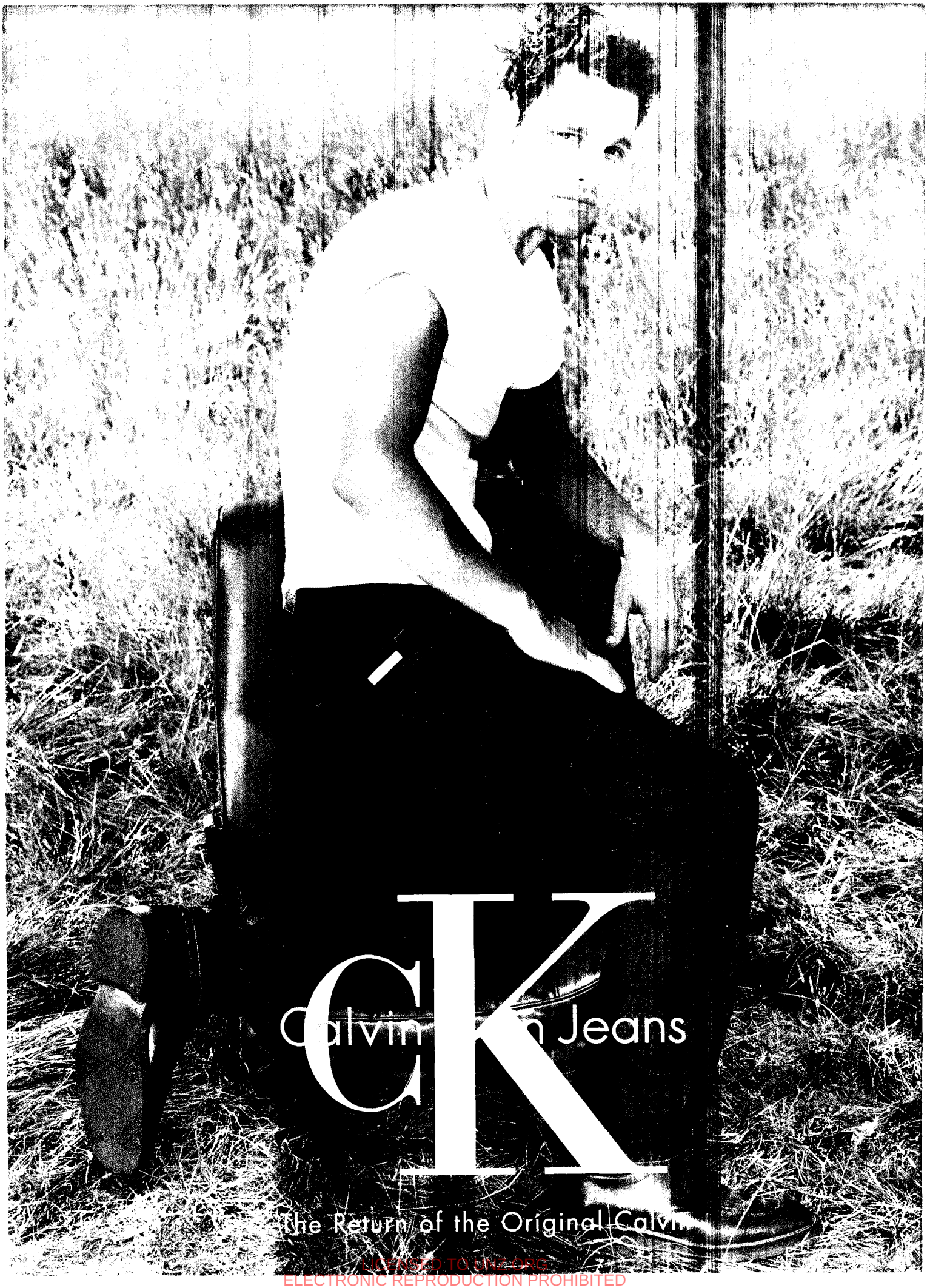

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